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Sea Swallow

Annual Report of the Royal Naval Birdwatching Society

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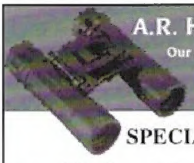

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Masked (or Blue-faced) Booby *Sula dactylatra* photographed from VLCC *Libra Star*, July 2000. *Photo:* Captain PA Woods RD RNR.

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Subscription rates: Full and associate members £8 (£7 if covenanted) annually. Due 1 January.

Library rates: Cost of *Sea Swallow*, (£8) plus postage.

Membership: Has been widened from the RN to include those, regardless of nationality, who share a common background of the sea.

Aims and Activities: The primary aim of the Society is to promote a forum for the exchange of information on seabirds, and of landbirds at sea, by members for whom birdwatching is a spare-time recreation and hobby. The secondary aim is to co-ordinate the efforts of individual members using standardised recording methods so that observations can be of value to the professional ornithologist ashore. In addition to the promotion of observations afloat, the RNBWS organises fieldwork and expeditions, usually in cooperation with the Army and RAF Ornithological Societies.

RNBWS Record Forms: Standardised forms for recording Seabirds and Landbirds at sea, Seabird Census sheets and Birds examined in the Hand (BEH) forms have been designed for use at sea. Stocks are held by Warrant Officer C A R Bailey, 8 Grange Close, Gosport, Hants PO12 3DX (Tel: 01705 526264). Please give detailed requirements and enclose a large (A4) stamped and self addressed envelope.

Completed Record: Forms (both Seabirds and Landbirds) should be sent to the Editor of *Sea Swallow*.

Material for publication in *Sea Swallow* should be sent to the Editor. Instructions to authors can be found on page 68.

An application form for membership is on page 65 of this edition of *Sea Swallow*.

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PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

The small band of us who gathered for the Annual General Meeting in 2000 shared the excitement of testing the PC data-base of records from *Sea Swallow* which has been built up single-handedly by Stan Howe. Fielding our enquiries with great aplomb, he indicated how the result of his patient endeavours allows patterns and relative density of species observations to be displayed. Happy memories were brought back for a number of us as he also demonstrated how easy it is to 'drill down' and pull out the details of individual observations.

In an article on the pattern of *Sea Swallow* records from the Gulf of Suez, published in the last issue of this journal, Stan showed how the PC data-base permits us to review RNBWS observations and extract more knowledge from them. This would be a fruitful area of endeavour for members whose prospects of further sea observing are now constrained.

So, our congratulations should go to Stan Howe, and our warm thanks, once again, to Bill Bourne, Michael Casement, Stephen Chapman, Neil Cheshire and their predecessors, whose quality control and knowledge underpin the integrity of the integral data. Looking ahead, what other initiatives are waiting to be launched, and what might your part be? Involvement and ideas are our life-blood. Please keep contributing both.

David Dobson, President

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

Firstly, may I echo our President's enthusiastic welcome for the RNBWS PC data-base of observations from our first half century. I certainly hope that members may be encouraged to fresh efforts by the appearance of this tool, which brings home so vividly how our isolated, individual work builds up to contribute to a corpus of knowledge.

At the same time I feel a challenge to us to keep up the quality of the input we make, and to continue our efforts to enable others to make accurate reports. In this respect I found my own opportunities to resume observations during 2000 a salutary reminder of the need for thorough recording. As amateur watchers we just may not appreciate at the time the full significance of something which we are seeing - or think that we are seeing.

Certainly one personal aim as Hydrographer of the Navy is to encourage all RN observers of the environment to aim for comprehensive records. Yes, computers are powerful analytical tools. Yes, we need to configure our inputs to facilitate absorption. But unless our observations have substance are they fit for purpose? In my view the RN could do much better than it is at present, with few records matching the quality of MN records which appear in *The Marine Observer*. I will be reviewing standing instructions for the Fleet. I hope that RNBWS members will be in the van in contributing to, and caring for, the observation logs in their ships.

Michael Barritt, Chairman

EDITORIAL

I write this year's Editorial at sea during an intense period of Operational Sea Training (OST) onboard *HMS Montrose*. At this very moment we are 'under attack' from aircraft and the ship is manoeuvring violently to ensure her missile systems can engage. You will appreciate that any form of birdwatching at sea is neither allowed nor understood during these scenarios. That said, in the less hectic moments, I have been able to get onto the bridge wings and spend a few idle moments watching Fulmars, Gannets and Shearwaters glide effortlessly around the Eddystone Light.

Sea Swallow 50 is a momentous publication landmark, and this is recognised by the inclusion this year of colour plates. These photographs, donated by a new contributor Sam Alexander, are of an extremely high standard and certainly enhance the publication. Additionally, black and white photographs have been used to illustrate the excellent articles received. I am grateful to Bill Murphy for his article describing pelagic seabirds in the south-eastern Caribbean; again a new contributor to *Sea Swallow*. Further articles from previous authors, Stan Howe and Lt Dan Gates are included; they continue to be staunch supporters of RNBWS. Finally, I am grateful to Albert Chipps for his observations from vessels around South Africa.

Whilst articles and photographs now arrive in sufficient quantity to produce a viable publication, there is still a need for quality observations of both seabirds and landbirds at sea to maintain the database painstakingly maintained by Stan Howe. The lack of any Landbird analysis this year emphasises this. Once we have left OST, I have resolved to become a conscientious recorder. I urge all of you in a similar, fortunate position to follow my lead as we move forward into the next half-century of *Sea Swallow*.

Gary Lewis, Editor

Fairy Tern *Gygis alba* - Cousin Island, Seychelles August 1997.
Photo: Sam Alexander.

OBSERVATIONS OF SEABIRDS

by Dr WRP Bourne

There has been a further decline in the number of observers, offset by some massive contributions. Dan Gates has provided numerous observations around the Falklands, and an interesting report of King Penguins among other species over what appears to be the shelfbreak to the north. Nigel Milius has continued his observations in the Australasian Antarctic, spending three weeks in the ice with the Emperor Penguins. D Nevitt has also provided detailed notes from a trip to Australia, and David Ballance for a voyage round the Mediterranean.

The main problem is that nobody, except Nigel Milius and Gary Lewis for his British Black-browed Albatross, has provided adequate notes to substantiate the more unusual observations this year, so that they increasingly have to be taken on trust. There has been an increasing tendency for people to assume that they can get away with any claim to unusual records in *Sea Swallow*, as for example the first reports of Salvin's Albatross and Cayenne Tern for the Falklands last year, and it is really not satisfactory to submit such unusual records without supporting documentation.

This situation is being made worse by the current fashion for treating what were formerly regarded as races of birds only distinguishable with difficulty in the field as separate species. Thus, for example, we are now receiving many more records of 'Yellow-legged Gulls' than Herring Gulls, though it seems doubtful how many have been identified on any other grounds than their location, but, at present few of such forms as the Caspian, Armenian and Heuglin's Gulls which seem likely to be occurring among them. It seems unlikely all this splitting will result in more reliable observations at sea.

Observers (numbers of sheets of notes in brackets): -

Mr DK Ballance. *MV Spes*, Sep - Oct 2000 (30).
Messrs P and M and Mrs K Cartwright. *MV Pride of Bilbao*, Portsmouth- Bilbao and return, Aug - Sep 2000 (3).
Lt D Gates *HMS Dumbarton Castle*, South Atlantic Jun - Oct 1999 (13)
Captain Thomas Johanssen, *MS Marine Ranger*, Port Kamsar, Mar 2001.
Lt Cdr GD Lewis *HMS Montrose*, Western Approaches, Nov 2000 (3).
Mr Nigel Milius. *MV Polar Bird*. Macquarie Island- Hobart, Nov - Dec 2000 (17).
Mr D Nevitt. *Containership Romance*. England- Suez- Fremantle- Sydney, Feb - Mar 2001 (29).
Captain PA Woods *MV Libra Star*, Off Fernando de Noronha, July 2000 (1).

OBSERVATIONS

GREBES *Podicipedidae*
Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristus*. 120 at 31.5°N 32.2°E (18°C) entering Port Said on 10 Feb '01, and 500 at 30.2°N 32.4°E in the Suez Canal next day (DN).
Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps caspicus*. 100 with the last (DN).

PENGUINS *Spheniscidae*

King Penguin ***Aptenodytes patagonicus.*** Up to eight seen five times between 43.5° 56.6°W and 42.5°S 56.4°W on the edge of the Patagonian shelf north of the Falklands on 5 Oct '99 (DG).

Emperor Penguin ***Aptenodytes forsteri.*** One possible bird seen with the previous King Penguins (DG). Up to seven seen on most days 23 Nov - 15 Dec between 62.5 - 65.2°S 103.2 - 111.0°E (NM).

Gentoo Penguin ***Pygoscelis papua.*** Up to seven, four times around the Falklands Jun - Aug, two at 42.6°S 56.6°W on the Patagonian shelfbreak on 5 Oct '99 and one at 37.4°S 55.8°W next day (DG).

Adélie Penguin ***Pygoscelis adeliae.*** Up to 38 seen on most days 30 Nov - 18 Dec between 64.9 - 65.2°S 103.2 - 107.8°E (NM).

Chinstrap Penguin ***Pygoscelis antarctica.*** Two possibles seen at 43.5°S 56.6°W north of the Falklands on 5 Oct '99 (DG).

Macaroni Penguin ***Eudyptes chrysolophus.*** One on the Patagonian shelfbreak at 42.5°S 56.4°W on 5 Oct '99 (DG).

Rockhopper Penguin *Eudyptes chrysocome* - Pebble Island, Falklands, November 1996. *Photo:* Sam Alexander.

ALBATROSSES *Diomedeidae*

Wandering Albatross ***Diomedea exulans.*** One at 52.1°S 57.6°W off the Falklands on 29 Jul '99 and up to three along the Patagonian shelfbreak six times between 48.01°S 57.0°W and 41.4°S 56.3°W on 4 - 5 Oct '99 (DG), up to four daily between 52.5°S 131.2°E and 46.1°S

142.9°E on 23 - 25 Dec (NM) , one at 35.5°S 130.0°E (21°C) on 27 Feb and three at 37.0°S 139.2°E (18°C) on 1 Mar '01 (DN).

Royal Albatross *Diomedea epomophora.* One of the northern form *sanfordi* at 49.4°S 137.3°E on 24 Dec (NM).

Black-browed Albatross *Diomedea melanophris.* Up to 20, 39 times around the Falklands in Jun - Sep and north to 37.1°S 55.3°W on 6 Oct '99 (DG). A subadult followed a fishing boat with gulls, then *HMS Montrose*, then another fishing boat at 50.1°N 04.3°W off south Cornwall on 14 Nov (details supplied - GDL). On the same day seen leaving Macquarie Island, with up to four between 46.3 - 56.9°S 131.2 - 156.9°E until 25 Dec; the most distant at 58.5°S 118.2°E on 21 Dec had the dark smudges on the central underwing and prominent eye patch of the form *impavida*, though the pale iris could not be seen (NM). One off Adelaide (21°C) at 35.5°S 138.1°E (18°C) on 28 Feb '01 (DN).

Shy Albatross *Diomedea cauta.* One of the White-capped form *cauta* at 46.3°S 142.9°E on 25 Dec, 25 coming into Hobart next day (NM), and three at 37.0°S 139.2°E (18°C) SE of Adelaide on 1 Mar '01 (DN).

Yellow-nosed Albatross *Diomedea chlororhynchos.* Three on 6 Oct '99 at 37.1°S 33.5°W (DG) and one at 37.0°S 139.2°E (18°C) SE of Adelaide on 1 Mar '01 (DN).

Grey-headed Albatross *Diomedea chrysostoma.* Seen three times off the Falklands in Jul - Aug '99 and north to 46.9°S 56.9°W on 4 Oct '99 (DG). Up to four seen four times between 52.5 - 56.2°S 131.2 -156.9°E in Nov - Dec (NM).

Light-mantled Albatross *Phoebetria palpebrata.* Eight seen leaving Macquarie Island on 14 Nov, and up to 11 ten times between 55.2 - 62.5°S 110.3 -156.9°E until 20 Dec (NM).

FULMARS *Fulmarinae*

Southern and Northern Giant Petrels *Macronectes giganteus* and ***M. halli.*** Up to 20, apparently all Southern, daily around the Falklands and north to 37.3°S 55.7°W in Jun - Oct '99 (DG). 50 seen leaving Macquarie Island on 14 Nov, with three Northern identified at 55.2°S 156.9°E next day, and then up to 13, where identified Southern, on most days at sea between

Southern Giant Petrel *Macronectes giganteus* -
35°15'S 21°24'E, November 1999. *Photo:* A Chipps.

46.3 - 65.2°S and 103.4 -156.9°E in Nov - Dec (NM).

Northern Fulmar ***Fulmarus glacialis.*** Up to five seen off Brittany on three voyages in Aug - Oct 00 (P, M & KC, DKB).

Southern Fulmar ***Fulmarus glacialoides.*** Most 32 at 51.7°S 60.3°W off the Falklands on 22 June '99, and smaller numbers regularly later, with six on the Patagonian shelfbreak at 37.3°S 55.7°W on 6 Oct (DG). Up to 13 also seen regularly at sea between 55.2 - 65.2°S 103.1 - 156.9°E in Nov - Dec (NM).

Antarctic Petrel ***Thalassoica antarctica.*** Up to 30 regularly seen at sea near ice between between 61.7 - 65.2°S 103.1 -120.4°E in Nov - Dec (NM).

Cape Petrel ***Daption capense.*** Up to 17 regularly seen at sea around the Falklands in Jun - Oct, with a maximum of 93 to the north at 37.3°S 55.7°W on the Patagonian shelfbreak on 6 Oct '99 (DG). Up to 20 also seen at sea between 55.2 - 65.2°S 103.1 - 156.9°E in Nov - Dec (NM).

Snow Petrel ***Pagodroma nivea.*** Up to 28 seen regularly in the far south between 64.3 - 65.2°S 103.1 - 111.0°E in Nov - Dec (NM).

Kerguelen Petrel ***Lugensa brevirostris.*** One at 37.0°S 139.2°E (18°C) SE of Adelaide on 1 Mar '01 (DN).

Broad-billed Prion ***Pachyptila vittata.*** Five reported at 07.0°S 78.2° (30°C) SE of the Chagos group on 19 Feb '01, and one at 35.5°S 138.1°E (21°C) off Adelaide on 28 Feb '01 (DN).

Narrow-billed and **Antarctic Prions** ***Pachyptila desolata*** and ***P. belcheri.*** Up to 300 prions around the Falklands in Jun 2 - Oct '99 were usually identified as Narrow-billed (DG), and up to 100 at sea between 43.2 - 61.7°S 110.3 - 156.9°E as Antarctic, with a Narrow-billed at 49.4°S 137.3°E on 24 Dec (NM).

Fairy or **Fulmar Prions** ***Pachyptila turtur*** and ***P. crassirostris.*** Two 'pseudoprions' probably seen at 52.5°S 131.2°E on 23 Dec, and 25 at 49.4°S 137.3°E next day (NM).

Blue Petrel ***Halobaena caerulea.*** Up to 20 seen at sea eight times between 55.2 - 62.5°S 110.3 - 156.9°E in Nov - Dec (NM).

Great-winged Petrel ***Pterodroma macroptera.*** 34 seen at 35.5°S 138.1°E (21°C) off Adelaide on 28 Feb '01, and 295 approaching Sydney on 4 Mar (DN).

White-headed Petrel ***Pterodroma lessonii.*** One at 55.2°S 156.9°E on 15 Nov, 17 at 52.5°S 131.2°E on 23 Dec, and seven at 46.3°S 142.9°E on 25 Dec (NM).

Mottled Petrel ***Pterodroma inexpectata.*** Single birds at 56.9°S 150.4°E on 17 Nov and 58.1°S 146.1°E next day (NM).

Soft-plumaged Petrel ***Pterodroma mollis.*** Two off Macquarie Island on 14 Nov (NM), and one at 37.0°S 139.2°E (18°C), SE of Adelaide, on 1 Mar '01 (DN).

Bulwer's and **Jouanin's Petrels** ***Bulweria bulwerii*** and ***B. fallax.*** One Bulwer at 42.8°N 09.8°W off NW Spain on 12 Nov (GDL). A petrel of this type seen at 12.2°N 44.5°E (28°C) in the inner Gulf of Aden on 14 Feb '01 was identified as Jouanin's Petrel, but then 12 at 11.9°N 51.7°E and 08.5°N 52.8°E (28°C) next day, four at 07.2°N 58.0°E the day after and c280 km NE of the Chagos Bank (ca 4°S 71°E?) on 18 Feb, seven at 07.0°S 78.2°E (30°C) SE of the Chagos next day, and one at 11.4°S 84.6°E (30°C) the day after as Bulwer's Petrel (DN). Both species apparently winter here, with more Jouanin's in the north and Bulwer's in the south, and it seems possible there has been some confusion?

SHEARWATERS ***Procellariinae***

Grey Petrel ***Procellaria cinerea.*** Three at 43.5°S 56.6°W on 5 Oct '99 (DG).

White-chinned Petrel ***Procellaria aequinoctialis.*** Three at 58.5°S 118.2°E on 21 Dec, 33 at 46.3°S 142.9°E on 25 Dec, two at 43.2°S 147.5°E off Hobart on 26 Dec (NM), three at 35.5°S

138.1°E (21°C) off Adelaide on 28 Feb '01, and ten at 37.0°S 139.2°E (18°C) SE of Adelaide on 1 Mar '01 (DN).

Cory's Shearwater ***Calonectris diomedea.*** Some 27 reports from European waters in the autumn including 254 in 13 hrs rounding Brittany on 30 Aug, 63 in eight hours sailing north from Bilbao next day (P, M and KC), 55 at 46.3°N 08.1°W in the Bay of Biscay on 19 Sep, 245 at 38.7°N 09.6°W approaching Cape St Vincent and 409 at 36.0°N 09.3°W beyond it on 20 Sep, 84 at 37.O°N 14.O°E and 355 at 36.7°N 15.01°E south of Sicily (an important feeding area) on 23 Sep, 11 at 37.5°N 24.2°E and 43 at 38.6°N 25.9°E between the Piraeus and Izmir on 25 Sep, 43 again at 38.0°N south of Izmir next day, six at 30.8°N 30.3°E between Aboukir and. Alexandria on 29 Sep, 162 at 41.4°N 12.4°E west of Italy on 6 Oct. 67 at 41.5°N. 02.5°E and 411 at 39.5°N 01.3°E east of Spain on 8 Oct, 67 at 38.0°N 08.8°W off Portugal on 10 Oct, 27 at 42.0°N 09.7° off NW Iberia on 12 Oct and 14 at 46.5°N 08.2°W in the Bay of Biscay next day (DKB). In this area there was still one at 46.0°N 08.2°W on 8 Nov, two at 35.8°N 06.3°W on 10 Nov, and one 42.8°N 09.8°W on 12 Nov (GDL).

Wedge-tailed Shearwater ***Puffinus pacificus.*** Four at 07.0°S 78.2°E (30°C) SE of the Chagos group on 19 Feb '01, seven at 25.1°S 104.8°E (23°C) on 23 Feb '01, five at 32.0°S 115.2°E (23°C) leaving Fremantle on 25 Feb '01, and three at 35.5°S 119.1°E (21°C) in the Great Australian Bight next day (DN).

Flesh-footed Shearwater ***Puffinus carneipes.*** First four seen at 25.1°S 104.8°E (23°C) on 23 Feb '01, 1161 at 29.5°S 111.6°E (24°C) next day, 964 at 35.5°S 119.1°E (21°C) in the Great Australian Bight on 26 Feb '01, 1060 at 35.5°S 138.1°E (21°C) off Adelaide on 28 Feb '01, and the last 153 at 35.5°S 130.0°E (21°C) on 27 Feb '01 (DN).

Great Shearwater ***Puffinus gravis.*** 331 at 37.3°S 55.7°W on the Patagonian shelfbreak on 6 Oct '99 (DG), at least 43 seen in 13 hours rounding Brittany on 30 Aug and 55 in eight hours north from Bilbao next day (P, M and KC), at least 30 at 49.1°N 05.2°W and 23 at 46.3°N 08.1°W rounding Brittany and two at 45.8°N 08.7°W off Finisterre on 19 Sep, 14 at 38.0°N 08.8°W on 10 Oct, three at 42.0°N 09.7°W off NW Iberia on 12 Oct, at least 623 at 47.5°N 07.0°W west of Quimper next day (DKB), and 14 flying SSW at 43.1°N 09.8°W on 12 Nov (GDL).

Sooty and **Short-tailed Shearwaters** ***Puffinus griseus*** and ***P. tenuirostris.*** Since these were not always separated, they are treated together. In the South Atlantic two Sooty Shearwaters at 41.4°S 56.3°W on 5 Oct '99 and 19 around 37.4°S 55.8°W next day (DG), in the North Atlantic one off Brittany on 30 Aug and four north of Bilbao next day (P,M and KC). South of Australia one Sooty/Short-tailed at 55.2°S 156.9°E on 15 Nov, 200 Short-tailed and 400 unidentified shearwaters at 58.1°S 146.1°E on 18 Nov, ten at 59.5°S 140.6°E on 19 Nov, a Short-tailed at 60.6°S 135.8°E on 20 Nov, five undetermined at 61.7°S 110.3°E on 20 Dec. two at 58.5°S 118.2°E next day, 1250 mainly Short-tailed at 55.6°S 124.8°E on 22 Dec, 2000 at 52.5°S 131.2°E on 23 Dec, 170 Short-tailed at 46.3°S 142.9°E 170 ST on 25 Dec and 5600 from 43.2°S 147.5°E into Hobart next day (NM). Three Short-tailed at 35.5°S 130.0°E (21°C) on 27 Feb '01, 15 with 32 Sooties at 35.5°S 138.1°E (21°C) off Adelaide next day, 27 Short-tailed at 37.0°S 139.2°E (18°C) on 1 Mar '01, 17 unidentified at 38.5°S 144.3°E (23°C) on 2 Mar '01, and 105 approaching Sydney on 4 Mar '01 (DN).

Manx Shearwater ***Puffinus puffinus.*** One north of Bilbao on 31 Aug (P,M and KC), at 36.0°N 09.3°W beyond Cape St Vincent on 20 Sep, and at 38.7°N 09.3°W leaving Setubal on 11 Oct (DKB). Five at 46.0°N 08.2°W on 8 Nov and one at 50.1°N 04.3°W on 14 Nov (GDL).

Levantine and **Balearic Shearwaters** ***Puffinus yelkouan*** and ***P. (y.) mauretanicus.***
While these have now been generally subjected to a 'political' split to enable the Baleatrics to claim to have an endemic bird species, some people continue to have difficulty telling them apart at sea. Three Balearics were seen north of Bilbao on 31 Aug and one off Brittany next day (P, M and KC), three at 49.0°N 05.2°W there on 18 Sep, one Levantine at 37.0°N 14.O°E off Sicily on 23 Sep, three at 38.6°N 25.9°E between the Piraeus and Izmir on 25 Sep, one at 38.O°N 25.5°E south of Izmir on 26 Sep and 35.3°N 30.0°E off Rhodes next day, 42 at 41.4°N 12.4°E off west Italy on 6 Oct, and five at 43.0°N 08.1°E on the way to France next day. Six Levantine and a Balearic were reported at 41.5°N 02.5°E off E Spain on 8 Oct, three Balearic at 38.0°N 08.8°W on 10 Oct, two at 42.O°N 09.7°W off NW Iberia on 12 Oct (DKB) and 46.0°N 08.2°W on 8 Nov, and four at 35.8°N 06.3°W on 10 Nov (GDL), five Levantine and a Balearic at 39.7°N 02.4°E (15°C) off the Balearics on 5 Feb '01, and single Balearics at 43.2°N 10.4°E off Elba on 7 Feb and 38.1°N 15.6°E (17°C) in the Straits of Messina next day (DN).
(But there appear to be few specimens of Balearic Shearwaters from east of the Balearic Islands).
Fluttering and **Hutton's Shearwaters** ***Puffinus gavia*** and ***P. huttoni.*** These are also a continuing source of confusion. Two Flutterers were first reported at the 35.5°S 119.°E (21°C) in the Great Australian Bight on 26 Feb '01, with a Hutton at 35.5°S 130.0°E (21°C) and two Flutterers at 35.5°S 138.1°E (21°C) and three Huttons at 35.5°S 138.1°E (21°C) off Adelaide next day, 13 Huttons at 37.0°S 139.2°E (18°C) SE of Adelaide on 1 Mar '01, six at 38.5°S 144.3°E (23°C) off Melbourne next day, and 13 with three Flutterers approaching Sydney on 4 Mar '01 (DN).
Little and **Audubon's Shearwaters** ***Puffinus assimilis*** and ***P. lherminieri.*** In the North Atlantic birds were seen off Brittany on 30 Aug and Bilbao next day (P,M and KC), and at 35.8°N 06.3°W west of Gibraltar on 10 Nov (GDL). South of Australia one at 55.2°S 156.9°E on 15 Nov (NM), 63 at 35.5°S 119.1°E on 26 Feb '01 and four at 35.5°S 130.0°E (both 21°C) next day (DN). In the Gulf of Aden there were 31 'Persian Shearwaters' at 12.2°N 44.5°E on 14 Feb '01 and six at 11.9°N 51.7°E and seven at 08.5°N 52.8°E (both 28°C) next day (DN).

DIVING-PETRELS ***Pelecanoidinae***
Common Diving-petrel ***Pelecanoides urinatrix***. South of Australia an unidentified diving-petrel probably of this species was seen at 55.6° 124.8°E on 22 Dec (NM), and two at 37.0°S 139.2°E (18°C) SE of Adelaide on 1 Mar '01 (DN).

STORM-PETRELS ***Hydrobatidae***
Wilson's Storm-petrel ***Oceanites oceanicus.*** In the North Atlantic seven at 38.7°N 09.6°W approaching Cape St Vincent and one at 36.0°N 09.3°W beyond it on 20 Sep (DKB). In the South Atlantic nine around 42.5°S 56.5°W on 5 Oct '99 and 164 around 37.3°S 55.7°W next day (DG). In the Australasian Antarctic two at 58.1°S 146.1°E on 18 Nov and then up to ten regularly between 62.5 - 65.2°S 103.1 - 111.0° E in Nov/Dec (NM).
Grey-backed Storm-petrel ***Garrodia nereis.*** One at 49.4°S 137.3°E south of Australia on 24 Dec (NM).
White-faced Storm-petrel ***Pelagodroma marina.*** In the Great Australian Bight one at 35.5°S 119.1°E on 26 Feb '01 and 33 at 35.5°S 138.1°E off Adelaide (both 21°C) two days later (DN).
Black-bellied Storm-petrel ***Fregetta tropica.*** South of Australia 26 at 61.7°S 110.3°E on 20 Dec (NM), one at 35.5°S 130.O°E on 27 Feb '01, and seven at 35.5°S 138.1°E off Adelaide

(both 21°C) next day (DN).
British Storm-petrel ***Hydrobates pelagicus.*** 31 seen in the western English Channel on 1 Sep (P.M and KC), and two at 31.5°N 32.2°E (18°C) entering Port Said on 10 Feb '01 (DN).
Swinhoe's Storm-petrel ***Oceanodroma monorhis.*** One c280 km NE Chagos Bank (ca 4.7°S 71.5°E) on 18 Feb '01 (DN).
Matsudaira's Storm-petrel ***Oceanodroma matsudairae.*** One at 11.4°S 84.6°E (30°C) on 20 Feb '01 and 16.1°S 91.3°E (29°C) next day (DN).

TROPICBIRDS ***Phaethontidae***
One Red-billed *Phaethon aethereus*, one Yellow-billed *P. lepturus* and one unidentified c280 km NE Chagos Bank (ca 4°S 71°E?) 18 Feb '01 (DN).

PELICANS ***Pelecanidae***
Australian Pelican ***Pelecanus conspicillatus***. 35 at 38.5°S 144.3°E (23°C) off Melbourne 2 Mar '01 (DN).

GANNETS AND BOOBIES ***Sulidae***
Northern Gannet ***Morus bassanus.*** Seen off western Europe on 15 days in the autumn, including 56 at 49.9°N 01.8°W off Cherbourg and 187 at 49.0°N 05.2°W rounding Ushant on 18 Sep, 66 at 38.7°N 09.6°W approaching Cape St Vincent and 45 at 36.0°N 09.3°W beyond it on 20 Sep, 162 at 36.0°N 04.0°W passing the Strait of Gibraltar on 9 Oct, 150 at 38.0°N 08.8°W next day, 411 at 42.0°N 09.7°W off NW Iberia on 12 Oct, 257 at 47.5°N 07.0°W west of Quimper on 13 Oct (DKB), 52 at 49.7°N 03.4°W (12°C) and 72 at 49.3°N 04.3°W (13°C) in the western English Channel on 2 Feb '01, and one at 39.7°N 02.4°E (15°C) off the Balearics on 5 Feb '01 (DN).
Australasian Gannet ***Morus serrator.*** 21 from 43.2°S 147.5°E into Hobart on 26 Dec (NM), 11 at 35.5°S 138.1°E (21°C) off Adelaide on 28 Feb '01, 156 at 37.0°S 139.2°E (18°C) SE of Adelaide on 1 Mar '01, 150 at 38.5°S 144.3°E (23°C) off Melbourne next day, and three approaching Sydney on 4 Mar (DN).
Brown Booby ***Sula leucogaster.*** Ten at 17.2°N 39.8°E (28°C) in the southern Red Sea on 13 Feb '01, seven at 11.9°N 51.7°E (both 28°C) in the Gulf of Aden two days later (DN), and numerous in the approaches to the Nunez River and Port Kamsar, Guinea on 1-3 Mar '01 (TJ); this suggests that a former colony south of the Bissagos Islands may still survive.
Masked Booby ***Sula dactylatra.*** 60 at 04.0°S 31.8°W, 35m east of Fernando de Noronha, on 7 Jul (PAW), six at 11.9°N 51.7°E (28°C) in the Gulf of Aden on 15 Feb '01, and one c280 km NE of the Chagos Bank (ca 4°S 71°E?) on 18 Feb '01 (DN).
Red-footed Booby ***Sula sula.*** Eight c280 km NE Chagos Bank (ca 4°S 71°E) on 18 Feb '01, and two at 07. 0°S 78.2°E (30°C) next day, 11. 4°S 84 .6°E (30°C) on 20 Feb '01, and 16.1°S 91.3°E (29°C) the day after (DN).

Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*, 12° 39.5'N, 62° 04.5'E, 9 September 1998.
Photo: Captain PA Woods RD RNR.

CORMORANTS AND SHAGS ***Phalacrocoracidaes***

Great Cormorant ***Phalacrocorax carbo.*** Seven at Izmir on 26 Sep, 20 in Setubal Roads, Portugal, on 10-11 Oct (DKB), two at La Spezia, Italy, on 6 Feb '01, and 200 at 30.2°N 32.4°E in the Suez Canal on 11 Feb '01 (DN).

Pied Cormorant ***Phalacrocorax varius.*** 20 from 32.0°S 115.2°E (23°C) leaving Fremantle on 25 Feb '01, eight at 35.5°S 138.1°E (21°C) off Adelaide on 28 Feb '01, and 40 at 38.5°S 144.3°E (23°C) off Melbourne on 2 Mar '01 (DN).

Black-faced Cormorant ***Phalacrocorax fuscescens.*** Four from 43.2°S 147.5°E into Hobart On 26 Dec (NM).

Imperial Shag ***Leucocarbo atriceps.*** Up to 260 recorded around the Falklands on 19 days between Jun - Sep '99 (DG).

European Shag ***Stictocarbo aristotelis.*** One entering La Spezia 6 Feb '01 (DN).

Rock Shag ***Stictocarbo magellanicus.*** Up to 12 recorded four times around the Falklands Jun - Jul '99 (DG).

FRIGATEBIRDS ***Fregatidae***

Great Frigatebird ***Fregata minor.*** An immature female at 7.0°S 78.2°E (30°C) SE of the Chagos on 19 Feb '01 (DN).

SHEATHBILLS ***Chionidae***

Yellow-billed Sheathbill ***Chionis alba.*** One or two seen around the Falklands on five days in Jun '99 (DG).

SKUAS AND JAEGERS *Stercorariinae*

Great Skua ***Catharacta skua.*** Nine seen rounding Brittany on 30 Aug, and one north of Bilbao next day (P,M and KC). Seven at 49.9°N 01.8°W off Cherbourg and four 49.0°N 05.2°W rounding Ushant on 18 Sep, five at 38.7°N 09.6°W approaching Cape St Vincent and 13 at 36.0°N 09.3°W beyond it on 20 Sep, five at 36.0°N 04.0°W passing the Strait of Gibralter on 9 Oct, 12 at 38.0°N 08.8°W next day, and four at 42.0°N 09.7°W off NW Iberia on 12 Oct, and at 47.5°N 07.O°W west of Quimper next day (DKB), and two at 42.8°N 09.8°W on 12 Nov and 50.1°N 04.3°W on 14 Nov (GDL), five at 49.3°N 04.3°W (13°C) on 2 Feb '01, and six at 36.0°N 05.0°W (17°C) passing the Straits of Gibraltar on 4 Feb '01 (DN).

Southern Skua ***Catharacta antarctica.*** One reported c280 km NE of the Chagos Bank (ca 4°S 71°E) on 18 Feb '01 (DN).

McCormick's (or 'South Polar') Skua ***Catharacta maccormicki.*** Up to three seen on 21 days between 58.5 - 65.2°S 120.4 - 103.2°S between 22 Nov - 21 Dec, including one with a Paris ring DZ 18988 in the ice at 65.0°S 106.7°E on 3 Dec (NM), three at 35.5°S 138.1°E (21°C) off Adelaide on 28 Feb '01 (DN).

Pomarine Skua ***Stercorarius pomarinus.*** One immature off Brittany on 30 Aug and two north of Bilbao next day (P, M and KC), then one at 36.0°N 04.0°W in the Strait of Gibralter on 9 Oct (DKB), and 31.5°N 32.2°E (18°C) entering Port Said on 10 Feb '01, an adult c280 km NE Chagos Bank (ca 4°S 71°E?) on 18 Feb, three at 07.0°S 78.2°E (30°C) to the SE next day, one at 35.5°S 138.1°E (21°C) off Adelaide on 28 Feb '01 and two at 37.0°S 139.2°E (18°C) SE of Adelaide on 1 Mar '01 (DN).

Arctic Skua ***Stercorarius parasiticus.*** Ten at 37.3°S 55.7°W on 6 Oct '99, and one at 41.7°s 56.3°W on 13 Oct '99 in the South Atlantic (DG), two seen rounding Brittany on 30 Aug and north of Bilbao next day (P, M and KC), one at 49.0°N 05.2°W off Ushant on 18 Sep, at 37.3°N 08.0°E off Galita on 22 Sep, at 30.8°N 30.3°E between Aboukir and Alexandria on 29 Sep, at 36.0°N 04.0°W in the Strait Gibralter on 9 Oct, at 38.0°N 08.8°N next day (DKB), at 50.1°N 04.3°W on 14 Nov (GDL), two at 31.5°N 32.2°E (18°C) off Port Said on 10 Feb '01, seven at 35.5°S 138.1°E (21°C) off Adelaide on 28 Feb '01 (DN), and one at 43.2°S 147.5°E entering Hobart on 26 Dec (NM).

Long-tailed Skua ***Stercorarius longicaudus.*** An immature in Setubal Roads, Portugal, 10 - 11 Oct (DKB).

GULLS *Larinae*

Audouin's Gull ***Larus audouinii.*** An immature at 35.8°N 06.3°W on 10 Nov (GDL) and three adults and an immature at 36.0°N 05.0°W (17°C) on 4 Feb '01 passing Gibraltar, and an immature at 31.5°N 32.2°E (18°C) entering Port Said on 10 Feb '01 (DN).

Lesser Black-backed Gull ***Larus fuscus.*** Five rounding Brittany on 30 Aug (P, M and KC), one at 36.3°N 03.4°W SE of Malaga on 21 Sep, at 37.0°N 14.0°E and 36.7°N 15.0°E off Sicily on 23 Sep, in Izmir on 26 Sep, at 35.3°N 30.0°E off Rhodes and two at 34.5°N 32.8°E approaching Cyprus on 27 Sep, 33 adults and an immature at 30.8°N 30.3°E between Aboukir and Alexandria on 29 Sep, 23 at 31.9°N 34.2°E between El Arish and Ashdod on 30 Sep, 300 at Ashdod next day, one at 40.0°N 15.0°E between Stromboli and Salerna on 5 Oct, at 43.0°N 08.1°E between Savona and France on 7 Oct, and 38.0°N 08.8°W on 10 Oct, 2000 (70 per cent of the form *graellsii* and 5 per cent *fuscus*) in Setubal Roads, Portugal, on 10 -11 Oct, (DKB), one at 49.7°N 03.4°W (12°C) on 2 Feb '01, 160 at 36.0°N 05.0°W (17°C) passing the Straits of Gibraltar on 4 Feb '01, one at 39.7°N 02.4°E (15°C) off the Balearics next day, many

hundreds at 31.5°N 32.2°E (18°C) entering Port Said on 10 Feb '01, and 200 a t 30.2°N 32.4°E in the Suez Canal next day (DN).

Yellow-legged Gull ***Larus cachinnans.*** Among many records around the Mediterranean, 150 assorted gulls around Cape St Vincent on 20 Sep, nine at 37.0°N 14.0°E off Sicily on 23 Sep, four at 36.8°N 23.0°E off Greece next day, over 1000 in the Piraeus on 25 Sep, over 1500 at Izmir next day, 30 at Limassol on 28 Sep, 14 at 30.8°N 30.3°E between Aboukir and Alexandria on 29 Sep, 30 at Ashdod next day, 93 at 40.0°N 15.0°E between Stromboli and Salerno on 5 Oct, 79 adults, 14 immatures and 40 gull sp at 41.4°N 12.4°E and 26 adults and three immatures at 42.5°N 12.4°E off W Italy next day, 118 at 43.0°N 08.1°E between Savona and France on 7 Oct, 144 adults and 58 immatures at 41.5°N 02.5°E off E Spain next day, 211 at 36.0°N 04.0°N passing Gibraltar on 9 Oct, and 100 on Setubal Roads, Portugal on 10 -11 Oct (DKB). 20 at 39.7°N 02.4°E (15°C) off the Balearics on 5 Feb '01, 100 off Elba on 7 Feb '01, 30 at 38.1°N 15.6E (17°C) passing the Straits of Messina next day, and 200 at 30.2°N 32.4°E in the Suez Canal on 11 Feb (DN).

Great Black-backed Gull ***Larus marinus.*** Five at 49.7°N 03.4°W (12°C) on 2 Feb '01 and ten at 36.0°N 05.0°W (17°C) passing the Straits of Gibraltar on 4 Feb '01 (DN).

Kelp Gull ***Larus dominicans.*** Up to 26 seen on 19 days around the Falklands in June - Oct '99 (DG), and 50 at 43.2°S 147.5°E entering Hobart on 26 Dec (NM).

Dolphin Gull ***Larus scoresbii.*** Up to three seen around the Falklands four times in June - Aug '99 (DG).

White-eyed Gull ***Larus leucophthalmus.*** Two at 30.2°N 32.4°E in the Great Bitter Lake while passing the Suez Canal on 11 Feb '01 (DN).

Great (Black-headed) Gull ***Larus ichthyaetus.*** Two with the last birds (DN).

Mediterranean Gull ***Larus melanocephalus.*** At least 50 at Izmir on 26 Sep, two at 41.5°N 02.5°E off E Spain on 8 Oct, one at 36.0°N 04.0°W passing Gibraltar on 9 Oct, at least 400 in Setubal Roads, Portugal, 10-11 Oct (DKB), 11 at 36.0°N 05.0°W (17°C) passing Gibraltar on 4 Feb '01, 60 at 38.1°N 15.6°E (17°C) passing the Strait of Messina on 8 Feb '01, 200 at 31.5°N 32.2°E (18°C) entering Port Said on 10 Feb '01, and two at 30.2°N 32.4°E in the Suez Canal next day (DN).

Black-headed Gull ***Larus ridibundus.*** A number of records, including at least 700 in Izmir on 26 Sep and 100 in Setubal Roads, Portugal on 10-11 Oct (DKB), 150 at 38.1°N 15.6°E (17°C) passing the Straits of Messina on 8 Feb '01, 700 at 31.5°N 32.2°E (18°C) entering Port Said on 10 Feb '01, and 3000 at 30.2°N 32.4°E in the Suez Canal next day (DN).

Slender-billed Gull ***Larus genei.*** One with the last birds (DN).

Sabine's Gull ***Larus sabini.*** Three to four rounding Brittany on 30 Aug, one north of Bilbao next day (P, M and KC), and one at 38.7°N 09.6°W approaching Cape St Vincent on 20 Sep (DKB).

Black-legged Kittiwake ***Rissa tridactyla.*** An immature off Brittany on 30 Aug, two off Bilbao next day (P,M and KC), two off Cape St Vincent on 20 Sep, at 42.O°N 09.7°W off NW Iberia on 12 Oct, and Quimper next day (DKB), 58 at 49.3°N 04.3°W (13°C) on 2 Feb '01, 40 at 43.2°N 09.9°W (15°C) next day, and two at 36.O°N 05.0°W (17°C) off Gibraltar on 4 Feb '01 (DN).

TERNS ***Sterninae***

Black Tern ***Chlidonias niger.*** Seven at 36.8°N 00.5°W on 21 Sep, seven more and seven unidentified marsh terns at 37.3°N 05.2°E next day, and one at 37.0°N 14.0°E off Sicily the day after (DKB).

Caspian Tern ***Sterna caspia.*** One at 30.8°N 30.3°E between Aboukir and Alexandria on 29 Sep (DKB).

Common Tern ***Sterna hirundo.*** Three north of Bilbao on 31 Aug (P, M and KC). Various 'comic' terns in the Mediterranean including at least ten Common at Izmir on 26 Sep, 42 at 30.8°N 30.3°E between Aboukir and Alexandria on 29 Sep, ten at 40.0°N 15.0°E between Stromboli and Salerna on 5 Oct, and four in the Strait of Gibraltar on 9 Oct (DKB).

Arctic Tern and **Antarctic Terns** ***Sterna paradisaea*** and ***S. vittata.*** A number of terns were seen in the Australasian Antarctic, including an unidentified bird at 56.2°S 152.9°E on 16 Nov, an Arctic in winter plumage and two Antarctic in summer plumage with a grey body, and black cap right down to the red bill on 18 Nov 58.1°S 147.1°E, a possible Arctic at 60.6°S 135.8°E on 20 Nov, 50 winter Arctic, 16 summer Antarctic and ten unidentified at 62.5°S 111.0°E on 23 Nov, an Antarctic at 65.1°S 109.6°E on 25 Nov, an Arctic at 64.9°S 106.4°E on 5 Dec, and an unidentified tern at 64.8°S 105.3°E on 8 Dec (NM); two Arctic seen at 32.0°S 115.2°E (23°C) on 25 Feb 01 (DN).

Bridled Tern ***Sterna anaethetus.*** Crossing the Indian Ocean 109 at 07.2°N 58.0°E on 16 Feb '01, two at 25.1°S 104.8°E (23°C) on 23 Feb '01 and 39.5°S 111.6°E (24°C) next day, and 40 at 32.0°S 115.2°E (23°C) leaving Fremantle the day after (DN).

Sooty Tern ***Sterna fuscata.*** Crossing the Indian Ocean again, 315 at 07.2°N 58.0°E on 16 Feb '01, 54 at 02.5°N 64.9°E next day, 136 c280 km NE Chagos Bank (ca 4°S 71.5°E) on 18 Feb '01, 35 at 07.0°S 78.2°E (30°C) on 19 Feb 01, and 30 at 39.5°S 111.6°E (24°C) on 24 Feb '01 (DN).

Sooty Tern *Sterna fuscata*, Bird Island, Seychelles 11 August 1997.
Photo: Sam Alexander.

Little and **Least Terns** *Sterna albifrons* and *S. antillarum.* One of the more debatable recent taxonomic splits has been the separation of the small terns of the Old and New Worlds into separate species. One pair of each were found breeding five metres apart at Midway in the central North Pacific in June 1999, increasing the known breeding range of both species by over 4000 km. They could be told apart most easily because the dominant Little Terns had well-defined white rumps, longer tails and a single call note, while in the smaller Least Terns the grey back intergraded with the rump and they had a double call note. There was also more dark on the primaries of the Least Terns, also found in the Old World in the form *saundersi.* Three Little Terns were seen north of Bilbao on 31 Aug (P,M & KC), and a small tern off Hobart on 26 Dec (NM).

Swift (or Crested) Tern ***Sterna bergii.*** 579 at 35.5°S 138.1°E (21°C) off Adelaide on 28 Feb '01, and 30 at 37.0°S 139.2°E (18°C) to the SE on 1 Mar '01 (DN).

Chinese Tern ***Sterna bernsteini.*** This has been one of the outstanding missing seabirds, only known from a few ancient specimens and more recent sight records, apparently never found breeding, and sometimes considered extinct. It has recently been observed that the former military area of the Matzu Archipelago (25.9 - 26.3°N 119.8 -120.1° E) has acquired large tern colonies, and it has been designated a nature reserve. In June eight adults of this species were found with four chicks there, the largest number ever recorded. Apparently it is seldom illustrated correctly - the bill is more orange than in the Crested Tern, with white end to the black tip of the bill, also seen in skins *(Liang et al 2000).*

Lesser Crested Tern ***Sterna bengalensis.*** Seen among large flocks of terns off Port Kamsar, Guinea on 1-3 Mar '01 (TJ); presumably wintering birds from the colonies on the Mediterranean coast of Libya?

Sandwich Tern ***Sterna sandvicensis.*** Four off Brittany on 30 Aug and north of Bilbao next day (P, M and KC), over 50 at Izmir on 26 Sep, 19 at 30.8°N 30.3°E between Aboukir and Alexandria on 29 Sep, seven at 36.0°N 04.0°W in the Strait Gibralter on 9 Oct, two at 38.0°N 08.8°W and 100 in Setubal Roads, Portugal, next day, five at 42.0°N 09.7°W off NW Iberia on 12 Oct (DKB), 300 at 31.5°N 32.2°E (18°C) off Port Said on 10 Feb '01 and at 30.2°N 32.4°E in the Suez Canal next day (DN).

ALCIDS ***Alcidae***

Razorbill ***Alca torda.*** Two at 38.7°N 09.3°W leaving Setubal, Portugal, on 11 Oct (DKB).

Little Auk ***Alle alle.*** One at 49.3°N 04.3°W (13°C) in the western English Channel on 2 Feb '01 and 41.5°N 09.9°W (15°C) next day (DN).

Common Guillemot ***Uria aalge.*** Two around 49.5°N 04.0°W (12 -13°C) on 2 Feb '01 (DN).

Atlantic Puffin ***Fratercula arctica.*** One at 42.0°N 09.7°W off NW Iberia on 12 Oct (DKB).

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Sea Swallow 50 (2001)

NOTEWORTHY OBSERVATIONS OF PELAGIC SEABIRDS WINTERING AT SEA IN THE SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN

by William L Murphy

Acknowledgement

This paper was originally written for 'Studies in Trinidad and Tobago Ornithology Honouring Richard ffrench' (F. E. Hayes and S. A. Temple, eds. Dept. Life Sci., Univ. West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad. Misc. Pap. 11, 2000), and is reproduced here, by kind permission of the Editor, Dr. Floyd Hayes of the University of the West Indies. Some additional information, gleaned from the *Sea Swallow* database, kindly made available by Stan Howe, has been included.

Introduction

The status of pelagic seabirds wintering in the southern Caribbean is poorly known since ornithologists and birders seldom venture out to sea in the region. Our current knowledge of pelagic seabird distribution in the region is summarized for the West Indies by Bond (1985) and Rafthele (1983) and Raffaele *et al* (1998), for Trinidad and Tobago by ffrench (1991), for Venezuela by Meyer de Schauensee and Phelps (1978), and for Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao (the southern Netherlands Antilles) by Voous (1983). Herein I report noteworthy observations of wintering pelagic seabirds in the southeastern Caribbean, based on observations made during three recent cruises.

Methods

On three occasions between 1996 and 1998 (4-14 January 1996; 2-13 March 1997; 22 December 1997 - 2 January 1998), I escorted a group of birders aboard an educational cruise ship between Curaçao and the Orinoco River, traversing approximately 2000 km per trip. Because the focus was on visiting islands as well as on cruising, many of the longer passages were traversed at night. While at sea during the day, however, fellow birders and I maintained a constant sea watch, recording sightings of bird species and their numbers. The ship's crew periodically supplied me with coordinate data.

Results and discussion

The following accounts highlight the most significant observations for 16 species of wintering seabirds, identified at sea during the cruises.

Yellow-nosed Albatross *Diomedea chlororhynchos*. Although not observed during these cruises, an individual of this species was observed at 11°50'N 60°55'W (40nm approx NNW of Tobago), on 19 September 1968, by 2nd Officer W Brackenridge of the British Merchant Navy. Observer's report:

'The bird was first sighted by the 3rd Officer who telephoned to me to say that it appeared to be an Albatross. On reaching the bridge with binoculars I found the bird about 250 yards from the ship.' Description as observed: 'The head was white, very slightly flushed with grey. The rump and underparts white. The underwing was white with a rather broad dark margin on the leading edge. The upperwing was very dark, possibly black. The back was a decided black-brown. The tail appeared to have brown or grey-brown markings. The bill was very dark with the upper margin yellow. The wing span about six to seven feet.' - For further details see *Sea Swallow* 21:36.

This record is under review by the Trinidad and Tobago Rare Birds Committee. If accepted, it will constitute the only record of any species of albatross for Trinidad and Tobago.

Cory's Shearwater ***Calonectris diomedea.*** Three individuals were observed during the cruises, all on the afternoon of 27 December 1997. Two individuals were observed at 10°59'N 62°29'W, north of the Paria Peninsula of Venezuela. The third bird was observed at 11°11'N 61°03'W west of and within distant sight of Tobago. All three individuals cruised low to the water, zigzagging to catch the wind off the waves and heading generally southeastward. The first two crossed our bow and were in view for about one minute. The third individual overtook the ship from behind and stayed in our vicinity for several minutes, affording us very close views before gradually heading off to the southeast, toward Trinidad. All three birds were the size of Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*. They were uniformly smoky brown above and immaculate white below with no obvious contrast between the head and upperparts and no prominent white band at the base of the tail as in Greater Shearwater *Puffinus gravis*. We saw the yellow bill on all three birds, a diagnostic feature of this species. Harrison (1983) shows the range of this species to be just outside the arc of the Lesser Antilles, so it would not be unexpected to find a few individuals just beyond the extreme western edge of their normal range. Although previously recorded from Trinidad (ffrench 1991) and south of Scarborough, Tobago (3 at 11°12'N 60°42'W; *Sea Swallow 45:38*), this is the first documented record of Cory's Shearwater for Tobago.

Audubon's Shearwater ***Puffinus lherminieri.*** One bird was observed at 11°08'N 66°11'W between Bonaire and Mochima National Park near Puerto la Cruz, Venezuela, on 6 January 1996. Two were noted at 11°20'N 64°47'W, southwest of Isla Margarita, Venezuela, on 7 January 1996; and one was noted between Isla Margarita and Tobago (10°58'N 61°52'W) on 27 February 1997. Each bird was alone and out of sight of land. These small, fast-flying, dark seabirds never followed the ship but twice made close approaches. Although the species nests on Little Tobago Island and was eagerly sought, we failed to note it on any of our visits to Tobago, although we passed east of Little Tobago Island on 7 March 1997 and again on 28 December 1997.

Wilson's Storm-Petrel ***Oceanites oceanicus.*** This species was seen much less frequently than Leach's Storm-Petrel and was not noted at all west of Isla Margarita. Two individuals were closely observed at 11°20'N 61°02'W as they pattered on the surface of the sea within sight of the northern tip of Tobago, west of Charlotteville, on 8 January 1996, and two individuals were closely observed pattering on the surface of the sea at 10°32'N 60°48'W, east of Manzanilla, Trinidad, at dawn on 31 December 1997. The high count was of 18 birds in the Columbus Channel on 4 March 1997. There are a few previous sight records from Tobago, which ffrench (1991) regarded as hypothetical. From our experience it would seem that the Columbus Channel would be a very auspicious area in which to search for both species of storm-petrels.

Leach's Storm-Petrel ***Oceanodroma leucorhoa.*** We most often encountered this species, which is often seen within sight of land, as widely separated pairs, less frequently in loose flocks of up to 12 birds, and least often as single individuals. It was most common in the Columbus Channel between Trinidad and Venezuela. The species was thinly and evenly distributed at sea from Bonaire to Trinidad, at sea east of Trinidad, in the Columbus Channel, and in Galleon's Passage between Trinidad and Tobago. It was absent south and east of Galeota Point, Trinidad. The ocean in that area is mainly the enormous, muddy outflow of the Orinoco River, sharply defined by colour and extending for several hundred miles seaward from the

Venezuela coast. During two passages (13 January 1996 and 6 March 1997) east of Manzanilla, Trinidad, and out of sight of land (roughly 10°30'N 59°30'W), as many as 12 individuals of this species were captured by hand on the upper decks of the ship after striking the superstructure during the night (photographs obtained). The high count was 122 birds on 4 March 1997 in the Columbus Channel.

Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus*. This species was seen on every daylight passage around Little Tobago Island, with greatest numbers always seen in the vicinity of the nesting areas on the eastern side of the island, as on 7 March 1997 and 28 December 1997. Away from Tobago, only a single individual of this species was observed, at 11°32'N 62°48'W, between Bonaire and coastal Venezuela, on 7 January 1996. Numbers diminished sharply away from the nesting cliffs on Little Tobago Island. The southernmost individual was sighted at 11°32'N 62°48'W, south of little Tobago Island, at a latitude parallel with Scarborough, Tobago. The high count was of 43 birds near Little Tobago Island on 7 March 1997.

Boobies *Sula* spp. These were the most abundant birds seen at sea in the southeastern Caribbean. We saw them from first light till last, near shore as well as far from shore, with almost equal ratios of adults to immatures. On all three trips, of any 100 boobies observed, the species ratio was approximately 80 Brown Boobies *S. leucogaster* to 20 Red-footed Boobies *S. sula*, with an occasional Masked Booby *S. dactylatra*. Only on St. Giles (off northern Tobago) and Little Tobago Island did we see any boobies ashore. As gulls do in other areas of the ocean, boobies congregated in the air near fishing trawlers. We saw such clouds of boobies on all three cruises. Around these congregations we generally could find jaegers (*Stercorarius spp.*) as well. Boobies were common everywhere in the main Caribbean basin but were absent from the Gulf of Paria, the Columbus Channel, the open Atlantic (except in the vicinity of northern Tobago), and the Orinoco River outflow. We noted that Masked Boobies were more common in the western Caribbean and were very scarce from Isla Margarita east. We also noted that the white morph of the Red-footed Booby was dominant from Isla Margarita west (roughly 50:1), whereas the brown morph was dominant farther east (roughly 10:1). High counts of all three species were made on 6 January 1996, during a full day at sea between Bonaire and coastal Venezuela: Brown Booby, 2800; Red-footed Booby, 457; Masked Booby, 14.

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens*. We never saw this species out of sight of land. It was commonly seen near Curaçao, Bonaire, Isla Margarita, Trinidad, and Tobago but was absent from the Orinoco River outflow and the Columbus Channel. Large numbers (1000+) were noted over St. Giles.

Great Skua *Catharacta skua*. The occurrence of this species in the southern Caribbean was a surprise, the only previous Caribbean record being from Belize (Howell and Webb 1995). On 7 January 1996, as we cruised southeastward from Bonaire to coastal Venezuela at 11°15'N 62°38'W, we spotted a lone gull-like brown bird ahead standing atop a patch of bright yellow *Sargassum*. It watched us with apparent interest and seemed unruffled as the ship bore down on it and passed within 15m of it. It was immediately recognizable as a skua by the combination of massive chest, heavy hooked bill, and very short tail. The rusty feathering on the head, neck, and back and the lack of a pale collar confirmed the identification as Great Skua rather than South Polar Skua *C. maccormicki*. The latter species is cold greyish-brown with a conspicuous pale collar. The only record of South Polar Skua from the Caribbean was a sighting at Icacos Point, Trinidad, on 13 July 1980 (Manolis 1981).

Great Skua *Catharacta skua* Hermaness, Unst, Shetland, July 1981.
Photo: Sam Alexander.

Several hours later, at 11°02'N 61°54'W, we noted a flock of approximately 100 Brown Boobies resting on the sea ahead. The boobies took to the air individually rather than as a flock as we passed.

The last seven birds to lift off, those farthest from the ship, were identifiable as Great Skuas, flashing prominent white wing patches on both dorsal and ventral surfaces and appearing uniformly reddish brown without a pale collar. One of the skuas made a brisk dash at a booby that was passing in front of our bow. With its beak the skua grabbed the booby by the secondaries of its left wing and bore it down to the ocean surface, directly in our path. Moments later both birds took to the air as the ship closed on them. The skua continued to chase the booby, which disgorged a small fish. The skua broke off the pursuit and settled to the surface to eat the fish. We observed another individual the next day (8 January 1996) at 10°56'N 62°44'W, between Isla Margarita and Tobago. (Another was observed on 3 January 1999, far from land between Isla Margarita and Tobago [*fide* Richard W. Coles, St. Louis, Missouri, USA]).

Jaegers *Stercorarius* spp. Harrison's (1983) range maps show the Caribbean as being devoid of jaegers; therefore one of the surprises on these cruises was the large number of jaegers seen. Adults were few, being outnumbered at least 100:1 by immatures. On our 1996 cruise, before the authoritative work by Olsen and Larsson (1997) became available, we attempted to identify immature jaegers by use of Dunn (1987), Harrison (1983), Kaufman (1990), and Robbins *et al* (1983). These texts featured only a few of the many plumages of both

light and dark morphs, so we were able to identify only a handful of the immature jaegers. Our ability increased dramatically with the knowledge obtained from the superb colour illustrations in Olsen and Larsson's book.

Jaeger sightings were far more numerous in the area roughly 10°-12°N x 65°-67°W, between Bonaire and Isla Margarita and south of Aves de Barloventa, Islas las Aves, Isla Blanquilla, Isles los Roques, Isla la Orchila, and Islas los Hermanos and northwest of Isla la Tortuga than they were anywhere else in the southern Caribbean. Jaegers were frequently seen harassing boobies; the concentration of jaegers in that area might be attributed to the high number of boobies that nest and feed there. On all three trips, of any 100 jaegers observed, the species ratio (of those identified to species) was approximately 90 Pomarine Jaegers *Stercorarius pomarinus* to eight Parasitic Jaegers *Stercorarius parasiticus* to two or fewer Long-tailed Jaegers *Stercorarius longicaudus*.

The **Pomarine Jaeger** was by far the most numerous species of jaeger observed, usually seen harassing boobies or resting on the surface of the sea with flocks of boobies. They were usually solitary, although we frequently could spot other jaegers in the distance. Individuals of this species sometimes rode the aerial bow wave of the ship or followed closely behind, offering superb opportunities for close comparison with illustrations in Olsen and Larsson. Besides the large numbers seen between Bonaire and Isla Margarita, as many as 20 Pomarine Jaegers per cruise were observed in the Columbus Channel. This species was observed in all seas around Trinidad and Tobago except for the Orinoco River outflow. On 12 January 1996, we observed several individuals of this species chasing Laughing Gulls *(Larus atricilla)* in the vicinity of Soldado Rock and later the same day observed an adult light-morph Pomarine Jaeger resting in the Gulf of Paria within one km of Port-of-Spain, not far from the 'sunken ship.' The jaeger was still visible from our ship after we moored at Sea Lots. Our high count was of 525 birds on 10 March 1997, during an all-day passage between Isla Margarita and Bonaire.

Although less common than the former species, the distribution of the **Parasitic Jaeger** was similar to that of the Pomarine Jaeger. We observed it on all three cruises, often in the company of Pomarine Jaegers and often within sight of land. For example, while moored at Pampatas, Isla Margarita, we observed four Parasitic Jaegers harassing Brown Boobies *Sula leucogaster* within the harbour. Parasitic Jaegers were observed sparingly around Trinidad and Tobago (three or four seen during each circumnavigation) and were more common on the Caribbean side than on the Atlantic side. Unlike the Pomarine Jaegers, this species did not follow the ship. Two were observed in the Columbus Channel on 4 March 1997. The high count was of 52 birds on 10 March 1997, during a passage between Isla Margarita and Bonaire.

The **Long-tailed Jaeger** was the least common species of jaeger on all three cruises. Although we saw only one adult sporting the diagnostic projecting tail feathers, the unique, buoyant flight style of this species enabled us to identify it at a distance. All sightings were made during passages between Bonaire and Isla Margarita, with none seen anywhere near Trinidad and Tobago. This species often followed the ship closely, flying lightly like a small gull. Only one individual was ever seen during a single day at sea.

Gulls *Larus sp.* The only species of gull observed from the ship during the three cruises was Laughing Gull. Except for our observations of the species around Trinidad and Tobago, our only sightings were of apparently migrating single birds far out at sea between Isla Margarita and Tobago. Apparently this species prefers the larger islands and is only atypically pelagic. Having witnessed the clouds of Laughing Gulls that accompany fishing fleets elsewhere, such as off the Atlantic coast of North America, we found it interesting to note their absence from

such fleets at sea between Bonaire and Tobago. The high count was of 85 birds on 8 January 1996 at 11°21'N 60°33'W, within sight of northwestern Tobago

Terns *Sterna and Anous spp.* At least nine species of terns nest in the southern Caribbean: Large-billed Tern *Phaetusa simplex*, Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*, Bridled Tern *S. anaethetus*, Sooty Tern *S. fuscata*, Least Tern *S. antillarum*, Royal Tern *S. maxima*, Cayenne/Sandwich Tern *S. sandvicensis*, Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus*, and Black Noddy *A. minutus*. However, the only species we observed in the Caribbean proper on any of the cruises was Royal Tern. We observed this species widely throughout the region, including in the Orinoco River outflow and over the open Atlantic. Usually seen singly, it was most numerous at 11°10'N 60°55'W, within sight of land off southwestern Tobago, where our high count was 120 on 27 December 1997. Although Bridled and Sooty Terns and Brown Noddy should have been present on Little Tobago Island and on other islands during our March visit, none was seen from our ship.

Adult Sooty Tern *S. fuscata* - Bird Island, Seychelles, 11 August 1997.
Photo: Sam Alexander.

We observed Least Terns on only one remarkable occasion. On the morning of 31 December 1997, our ship had emerged from the Orinoco River and was heading northwest toward the Columbus Channel. Between 11am and midday we overtook and gradually passed a single-species flock of Least Terns that stretched from 9°28'N 60°35'W to 9°36'N 60°55'W. The birds were flying leisurely just above the surface of the Orinoco River's brown water in a band about 50m wide. We observed no feeding, only an orderly array of terns in flight. We counted the birds and, after we had left the flock behind, we came to the consensus that the flock contained approximately 4,000 individuals. Although we had searched diligently for Yellow-billed

Terns *S. superciliaris* or other tern species in the flock, every bird we had examined had been a Least Tern. Such a large aggregation appears unprecedented. During the same hour, as we traded the Orinoco outflow for the clearer Columbus Channel we observed six Leach's Storm-Petrels, four Wilson's Storm-Petrels, two distant jaeger spp., and six Magnificent Frigatebirds.

Landbird species. On each trip a few probably migrating landbirds either accompanied the ship or landed aboard it. These incidents were common during passages between Bonaire and Tobago and were less common elsewhere. Species included Merlin *Falco columbarius*, Southern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*, Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*, and Grey-breasted Martin *Progne chalybea*.

Conclusions

The unprecedented numbers of various seabird species observed during these cruises, including a few species previously unreported from the region, reveal that much remains to be learned regarding the pelagic distribution of seabirds in the southern Caribbean. As nesting seabird colonies become increasingly threatened by human activities, quantitative studies of seabird distribution should be conducted to further assess the status of each species in the region.

Thanks

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Thanks are also due to members of the Royal Naval Birdwatching Society (RNBWS) for their major contribution to our knowledge of birds at sea through publication of their worldwide records in *Sea Swallows*, over the past 50 years; and especially to Stan Howe for compiling the *Sea Swallow* database, and thus making these records now readily accessible for comparison and analysis.

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William L. Murphy, 8265 Glengarry Court, Indianapolis, Indiana 46236 USA. billmurphy8@home.coms

Pomarine Skua ***(Stercorarius pomarinus)***

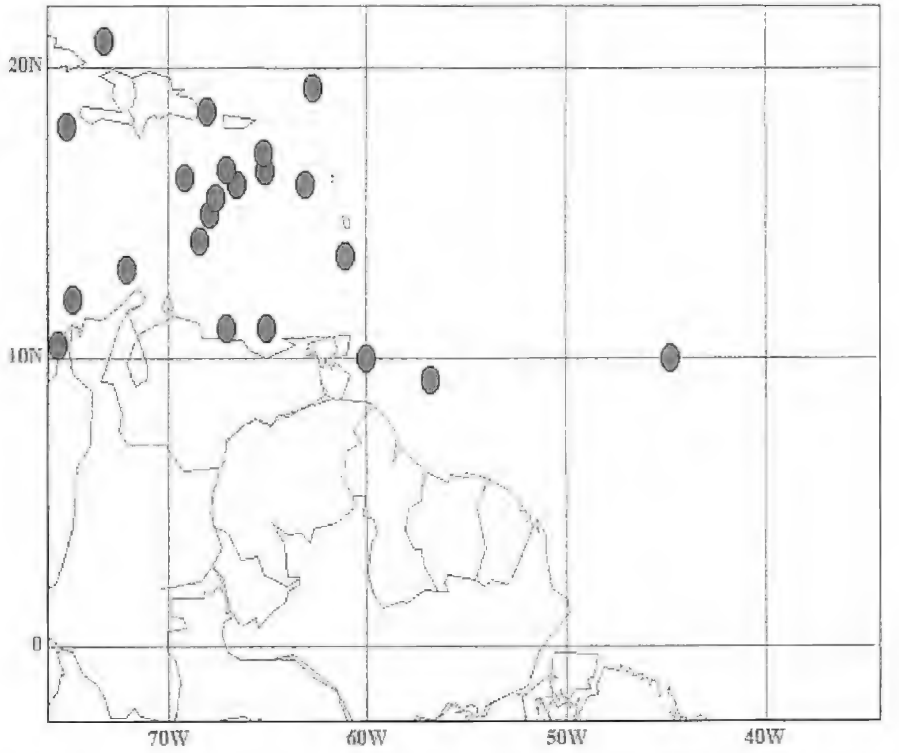

Figure 1: Distribution of Pomarine Skua *(Stercorarius pomarinus)* in SE Caribbean as mapped from records contained in the RNBWS database.

BIRDS IN THE STRAIT OF BELLE ISLE

by S Howe

In width and geographical attitude the Strait of Belle Isle is not dissimilar to the Straits of Dover, but its position to the east of a continent earns it the sobriquet 'Iceberg Alley'. Only during the months of May/June through into November is this strait, separating Labrador from Newfoundland, free of sea ice (SS 1:31) and then it offers a shorter route between the St Lawrence ports and the UK than the Cabot Strait to the south. Likewise the passenger/car ferry from St Barbe to Blanc Sablon across the western end of the strait is seasonal and is suspended from the end of October. Also in late summer there is more than an even chance that dense fog will blanket the strait for days on end.

Following the August 2000 Millennium Joint Meeting of the American, British and Canadian Ornithogists' Unions held in St John's NF, a short visit was paid to the northern and southern shores of the Belle Isle Strait, using the public ferry *Apollo* for the 20nm/90min crossings. Fortuitously on both voyages the weather was halcyon, with excellent visibility shore to shore.

Notes were made of the birds seen during the time the observer was in the area, and comparison is made here with previous records published in *Sea Swallow* from vessels between Belle Isle and the Gulf of St Lawrence. Members who have transited the strait in the past and reported sightings include EF Aikman, SE Chapman and R Walgate; and there are Met Log records from *mv Lackenby* and *mv CP Voyager*. Reference was also made to a substantive paper by our late Honorary Member, Prof VC Wynne-Edwards (1935) who transited the strait on the P&O liner *SS Ascania* during the summer of 1933.

Altogether 38 spp. are listed: some (*) are reported in *Sea Swallow* for the first time, others (+) reported earlier were not seen during this visit. The known status of all were checked in the various references cited below.

1. * Great Northern Diver *(Gavia immer)* Status: Breeds in the area.
24/8 On north shore at Pinware Village.
25/8 Off Ile du Bois in the strait.
25/8 On the south shore at Eddies Cove.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer* - Aberdeen Harbour January 1984.
Photo: Sam Alexander.

2. Northern Fulmar *(Fulmarus glacialis)* Status:
Infrequent visitor in August.
23/8 One flying parallel to *Apollo* in the strait.
25/8 One on the water in the strait.
c.1,000 on water and an iceberg 30/7/62 (SS16:16).

3. Great Shearwater *(Puffinus gravis)* Status: Non-breeding summer visitor
25/8 Two flying over in mid-strait.
Large numbers in the strait Jul - Sep 1953/63 (SS1 6)

4. Sooty Shearwater *(Puffinus griseus)* Status: Non-breeding summer visitor.
25/8 Possibles seen flying in mid-strait.
c.100 in strait with *P.gravis* 30/7/62 (SS16:16)

5. * Manx Shearwater *(Puffinus puffinus)* Status: Rated as only of casual occurrence
23/8 Four flying in mid-strait.
25/8 Four in mid-strait where a Humpback whale had just breached.
Note: this is perhaps the most surprising bird in this list. However the key features noted all point to them being correctly identified, and in recent years its presence off the NE coast of N America has been increasing with a small breeding colony becoming established off E Newfoundland.

6. Northern Gannet *(Morus bassanus)* Status: A few in strait in August; breeds in S Newfoundland.
24/8 One seen from Armour Point LH. (north shore).
Nearest previous reports off Belle Isle in Sep - Oct 1959 (SS13:12).

7. * Green-winged Teal *(Anas crecca carolinensis)* Status: Breeds in the area.
25/8 Seventeen on south shore at Eddies Cove.
26/8 Again present at Eddies Cove.

8. * Bald Eagle *(Hailiaeetus leucocephalus)* Status: At the northern edge of its range.
26/8 One on south shore near St Antony Airport

9. * Merlin *(Falco columbarius)* Status: Common resident.
25/8 Three singles seen on south shore at Noddy Bay, St Antony A/p and Eddies Cove.

10. American Kestrel *(Falco sparvarius)* Status: North of its usual range.
23/8 One hovering over north shore west of Blanc Sablon.
Individuals boarded ships,staying for days, 16/9/75 (SS26:28) and 4/10/80 (SS32:30).

11. * American Golden Plover *(Pluvialis dominica)* Status: Passage migrant from far north.
25/8 A flock on south shore near Watts Point Ecological Reserve.

12. * Grey Plover *(Pluvialis squaterola)* Status: Passage migrant from far north.
25/8 On south shore at Eddies Cove.

13. * Greater Yellowlegs *(Tringa melanoleuca)* Status: Breeds in the area; commonest wader here.
24/8 Three on north shore at L'Anse Amour.
25/8 On south shore at Anchor Point and Eddies Cove.
26/8 On south shore at Green I. Cove and Eddies Cove.

14. * Lesser Yellowlegs *(Tringa flavipes)* Status: A rare to casual visitor. Breeds far to the west.
26/8 On south shore at Eddies Cove.

15. * Spotted Sandpiper *(Tringa macularia)* Status: Breeds in the area
24/8 Several on north shore at L'Anse Amour.

16. * Ruddy Turnstone *(Arenaria interpres)* Status: Passage migrant from far north.
23 and 25/8 25-50 on north shore at Blanc Sablon.
25/8 On south shore at Green I. Cove and Eddies Cove.
26/8 On south shore at Eddies Cove.

17. * Long-billed Dowitcher *(Limnodromus scolopaceus)* Status: Casual visitor.
26/8 Five on south shore at Eddies Cove.

18. * Sanderling *(Calidris alba)* Status: An autumn transient.
23/8 A few on north shore at Blanc Sablon.

19. * White-rumped Sandpiper *(Calidris fuscicollis)* Status: An autumn transient.
23 and 25/8 On north shore at Blanc Sablon.

20. * Semi-palmated Sandpiper *(Calidris pusilla)* Status: A common autumn transient.
25 & 26/8 On south shore at Eddies Cove.
[>10,000 were seen on tidal flats at Windsor NS on Bay of Fundy some 10 days earlier]

21. Phalaropes *(Phalaropus sp.)* Status: Migrants from the far north.
23/8 One thought to be Red-necked Phalarope *(P lobatus)* on sea off Blanc Sablon
Six Grey Phalarope *(P.fulicaria)* reported off Belle Isle on 18/6/61 (SS 15:24)

22. Skua spp. *(Stercorarius spp.)* Status: Non-breeding summer visitors
23/8 Three possible Pomarine Skuas *(S. pomarinus)* off Blanc Sablon on north shore.
24/8 An uncertain Skua sp. off Saddle I. (Red Bay) on the north shore.
17 *S.pomarinus*, with eight *S.Parasiticus* and 17 *S.longicaudus* in approaches to strait on 15/8/84 (SS35:11)

23. * Great Black-backed Gull *(Larus marinus)* Status: Breeds in the area.
23-26/8 Ubiquitous on both shores and in the strait.

24. * Herring Gull *(Larus argentatus)* Status: Breeds in the area
23-26/8 Another ubiquitous species, including large numbers around fishing boats in the strait off St Barbe, and on Ile du Bois and Saddle I; probably all attributable to the American ssp. *L.a.smithsonianus.*

25. Kumlien's Gull *(Larus glaucoides kumlieni)* Status: Winters in the area.
23/8 An Iceland gull, probably this form, on north shore at Blanc Sablon ferry terminal. Reported in the strait on 12/11/56 (SS 10:07).

Adult Kumlien's Gull *Larus (glaucoides) kumlieni*, Banff Harbour, Grampian, 4 February 1989. *Photo:* Sam Alexander.

26. * Ring-billed Gull *(Larus delawarensis)* Status: Within its discontinuous breeding range.
23 & 25/8 A few on north shore near Blanc Sablon.

27. + Sabine's Gull *(Larus sabini)* Status: Classed a rare autumn visitor.
Hundreds present off Belle Isle on 25/8/65 and 26/9/65 and 3/10/65 (SS 19:73).

28. Black-legged Kittiwake *(Rissa tridactyla)* Status: Common Newfoundland: off Labrador winter.
23/8 A juvenile in the strait.
Previously birds reported being harried by skua spp. in the approaches to the strait on 15/8/84 (SS35:11).

29. * Common Tern *(Sterna hirundo)* Status: A common breeder in the area.
23/8 Many on north shore at Blanc Sablon; one seen feeding a begging yougster.
23/8 An agitated mass calling over the beach at L'Anse au Clair on north shore.
24/8 Eight on north shore at Armour Point and Saddle I.

25/8 Five on south shore at Eddies Cove and Green I. Cove.
25/8 On south shore at Shoal Cove East.
26/8 On south shore at Eddies Cove.

30. + Common Guillemot *(Uria aalge)* Status: breeds along both shores.
Reported with Sabine's Gulls off Belle Isle on 25/8/65 (SS 19:73).

31. * Atlantic Puffin *(Fratercula arctica)* Status: Breeds on north shore.
23/8 Three seen to rise from sea ahead of *Apollo's* bows
23 and 25/8 Numbers flying from and to Greenly I. off Blanc Sablon, as if provisioning young at a colony.

32. + Snowy Owl *(Nyctea scandiaca)* Status: Winters south to here in irregular numbers.
A pair of birds went aboard a vessel in the strait in a gale on 23/10/87. Stayed on board for 900nm to 360nm se Cape Farewell before disembarking (SS37:35).

33. * Horned Lark *(Eremophila alpestris)* Status: Breeds in area.
24/08 One on north shore at L'Anse Amour.

34. + Marsh Wren *(Cistothorus palustris)* Status: A vagrant, north of its usual range.
Reported off Belle Isle on 5/10/60 (SS14:32).

35. * Common Raven *(Corvus corax)* Status: Resident breeder; the common corvid here.
23/8 On south shore at Black Duck Cove.
24/8 On north shore at Forteau and Forteau Bay.
26/8 On south shore at St Barbe, Watts Point Eddies Cove and Green I. Brook.

36. * Lincoln's Sparrow *(Melospiza lincoinii)* Status: Resident breeder
26/8 On south shore at Eddies Cove.

37. * White-crowned Sparrow *(Zonotrichia leucophrys)* Status: Breeds in the area.
26/8 A juvenile on south shore at Eddies Cove.

38. * Savannah Sparrow *(Passerculus sandwichensis)* Status: Breeds in the area.
24/8 On north shore at Amour Point and Pinware River.
25/8 On south shore at L'Anse aux Meadows.
26/8 On south shore at Eddies Cove.

Sadly no bergs or growlers enlivened the scene, but some excitement was provided by the arrival of tourists being Zodiac-ed ashore from a US cruise ship *Levant*. They came to inspect the Norsemens' village at L'Anse aux Meadows; not a reference to lush grazing, but a corruption of *Medusa* - i.e Jellyfish Bay! This year was the celebration of 1000 years since Eric the Red's offspring made it to the New World from their home in exile on Greenland - Northern Labrador being just 200nm across the Davis Strait - to found this hunting and fishing outpost. The intrusion of this new wave of 2000AD immigrants was doubtless welcome to the local economy, but the shock to the fragile environment was probably less benign; in retaliation the

perfect summer weather broke, and it rained on them and us!

Belle Isle Strait Gazetteer (52N58W to 51N55W):

Amour Point	51:27N 56:52W	Anchor Point	51:13N 56:47W
Belle Isle	52:00N 55:15W	Belle Isle Str (mid)	51:18N 56:56W
Black Duck Cove	51:07N 56:46W	Blanc Sablon	51:25N 57:07W
Eddies Cove	51:24N 56:26W	Forteau	51:27N 56:56W
Forteau Bay	51:29N 56:55W	Green I. Brook	51:23N 56:24W
Green I. Cove	51:22N 56:34W	Greenly I.	51:24N 57:09W
Ile au Bois	51:24N 57:08W	L'Anse Amour	51:28N 56:51W
L'Anse au Clair	51:26N 57:03W	L'Anse au Loup	51:30N 56:49W
L'Anse aux Meadows	51:35N 55:31W	Noddy Bay	51:34N 55:29W
Pinware River	51:43N 56:40W	Pinware Village	51:37N 56:40W
Saddle I. (Red Bay)	51:43N 56:26W	St Antony Airport	51:23N 56:00W
St Barbe	51:11N 56:46W	Shoal Cove East	51:23N 56:30W
Watts Point ER	51:24N 56:19W		

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CHAGOS BIRDS

By Dr WRP Bourne

There have been important developments in the Chagos scene since the reports by Peter Carr in *Sea Swallow* 47 and 49. In 2000 the islanders evicted 30 years ago to make way for a United States base won the right in the High Court to return to the islands, and they have since lodged a multi-billion pound claim for compensation against the US Government. It remains to be seen what will happen to the recovering wildlife when they return flush with money.

It should also be realised that at least two of the rare new species reported by Peter Carr (2000) as recorded by Peter Symens in 1995, the Asiatic Dowitcher *Limnodromus semipalmatus* and Spotted Greenshank *Tringa guttifer*, were actually reported by an American visitor, P.L. Bruner (1995), who has failed to reply to a request for details, so these records should not be accepted until more information is available. Peter Symens (1999) has now also published a detailed list of the seabirds.

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Adult Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens*, 6 1st winter Ring-billed Gulls *Larus delawarensis* and 8 Bonaparte's Gulls *Larus philadelphia* - Nehalem, Oregon September 1996. *Photo:* Sam Alexander.

Laughing Gulls *Larus atricilla,* Royal Terns *Sterna maxima,* Sandwich Terns *Sterna sandvicensis and* Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis* - Estero Bay, Florida November 1994. *Photo:* Sam Alexander.

Sabine's Gull *Larus sabini* - Monterey Bay, California May 1992.
Photo: Sam Alexander

Dolphin Gulls *Larus scoresbii* - Port Stanley, Falkland Islands November 1996.
Photo: Sam Alexander.

Immature Southern Giant Petrel *Macronecites giganteus* - Port Stanley, Falkland Islands November 1996. *Photo:* Sam Alexander.

Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus* - Cousin Island, Seychelles August 1997. *Photo:* Sam Alexander.

Gentoo Penguins *Pygoscelis papua* - Pebble Island November 1996.
Photo: Sam Alexander.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus* - Vardo, Norway June 1998.
Photo: Sam Alexander.

1st winter Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla* - Fort Myers, Florida November 1994.
Photo: Sam Alexander.

Bridled Tern *Sterna anaethetus* - Bird Island, Seychelles August 1997. *Photo:* Sam Alexander.

King Penguin *Aptenodytes patagonicus* - Sealion Island, Falklands November 1996. *Photo:* Sam Alexander.

REPORTS OF SEABIRD SIGHTINGS
by Albert Chipps, Electrician on board the Anchor Handling Tug Pentow Skua

MV Pentow Skua (Anchor Handling Tug). *Photo:* A Chipps.

I have been serving periodic stints on the 'Oribi Oil Field' 80 miles South of Mossel Bay, off the southern coast of South Africa aboard the *Pentow Skua* since November 1999.

The tug's duty is simply to tie up to a tanker for a month at a time while it is attached to a 'calmbouy' filling its tanks from an undersea pipeline. Our position 35°15'S and 21°24'E, is situated on the well-known 100 metre deep 'Aghulas Bank' which supports South Africa's valuable demersal and pelagic fisheries.

Being an avid but amateur observer of the sealife around our coast, I was amazed at its abundance in this particular area, more than I have observed elsewhere on our coast.

First stint - November to December 1999:

When I got there, I was enthralled by daily exhibitions of wild feeding frenzies of huge schools of metre long Yellowtail (Albacore) as they devoured the dense shoals of pelagic fish that frequent this area. The water surface would appear to 'boil' as they chased their prey to the surface leaving nothing but a cloud of glittering silver scales drifting their way to the bottom. We deduced the 'prey' to be sardine and anchovy from the stomach contents of the yellowtail that we ourselves had caught. Of course they also provided sustenance for the large number of pelagic birds that would attack them from above.

Among the birds in constant in attendance were the most ubiquitous of our sea birds, the **White Chinned Petrels** (which can always be seen all around our coast), the **Yellow nosed-Albatrosses** seen in small numbers, (approx. 20 are visible most days), **Black browed Albatrosses** fewer than the yellow noses but are also to be seen on most days and **Antarctic (Southern) Skuas** (our ships namesake) living up to their descriptions as 'Cleptoparasites' by

Yellow-nosed Albatross *Diomedea chlororhynchos*
35°15'S, 21° 24'E, November 1999. Photo: A Chipps.

harassing all the other feeding birds in the area. A flock of around 50 seem to be 'resident' here for most of the year.

A small number of **Cape Gannets** would come and go on a daily basis, but occasionally they would put in a big appearance when up to 2000 of them would domineer the feeding ground with their headlong dives into the teeming shoals of fish. It was interesting to note the total absence of the other birds when the gannets make their appearance in such numbers. Where do they go to? Even the skuas thin out and only a few could be seen on the sidelines.

A resident flock of approximately 200 **Common Terns** roosted on the gunnels of the *'Skua'* every night. With the tops of their heads still speckled with white and pronounced carpal bars visible in flight and at rest, I took them to be young birds in their first winter plumage. My reference book (*Seabirds, an identification guide* by Peter Harrison) tells me that they had more than likely just arrived from the cold winter of the North Atlantic to enjoy our lovely sunshine and to fatten themselves up on our 'Aghulas Bank'.

Our three divers experienced an unforgettable scene when they went to investigate a commotion of activity on the surface nearby. They rode their rubberduck onto a dense mass of sardine that has been driven up from below. So thick was the shoal that they could push their arms up to the shoulder into a solid mass of fish being ravaged by yellowtail from below and birds from above. Sealife abounds here, dozens of dolphins leap around our bow, we've seen a Humpback Whale near the ship and hake and shark including a 1.9 metre Spear-nosed Skate are being caught from the skua.

Borrowing a mask from a diver, I grabbed an opportunity of getting into the water to see for myself. It was a warm 24 degrees and the visibility was excellent. At first I saw nothing but the rays of the sun converging down to some point deep in the blue abyss below. But the yellowtail soon appeared. I could make out their shapes coming straight up towards me from the depths. They arrived from all sides, hundreds of them swimming in circles around me, just out of arms reach until there were fish as far as I could see in all directions. It was an amazing experience. Back in the rubber duck, something big and white appeared near the surface - a 1.5 metre sunfish! It made no attempt to get away from us. So close, we could touch it!

Second Stint - February to April 2000:

The yellowtail are still here, but they now appear to have a different prey. From more samples taken from the stomachs of yellowtail, we identify them as **'Pike'** by their exceptionally elongated 'beaks'. During the feeding frenzies, they could seen leaping 'en mass' out of the water in the troughs of the swells.

The birds we saw were much the same as before except for the arrival of hundreds of **Cory Shearwater** down from their breeding grounds in the Mediterranean. They were still there when I left in April.

Butterflies and moths appear out here in great numbers and varieties. They flutter in haphazardly from over the ocean. We are 80 miles from the nearest land but they will arrive even on days with hardly a breeze to transport them. I marvel at how they are able to get out here. Do they really fly all that way out here? How long can they exist without sustenance?

Third Stint - September to November 2000:

The Yellowtail are still here feeding on sardines and anchovy as are the **White Chin Petrels, Yellow-nosed and Black-browed Albatross**, the skuas and a few new species have appeared: **Pintado Petrels (Cape Pigeon)**, were seen on occasions but very few in number. **Wilson's Storm-petrels:** also only a few seen and on odd occasions but their timing is right, according to my reference book, they should have just arrived from the North Atlantic and prior to returning to their breeding grounds in Antarctica in November. About 100 **Great Shearwaters** arrived on 4 October, they too have apparently just arrived from the North Atlantic.

We'd been trying to lure the pack of **Skuas** that would gather each evening for our galley slops, and were amazed when they began to take scraps from an outstretched hand. They soon got the idea and in no time would readily approach whenever even an empty hand was extended, coming so close as to brush your forehead with their wingtips.

Antarctic Skua *Catharacta antarctica* - 35° 15'S 21° 24'E, November 1999.
Photo: A Chipps

A little **Loggerhead Turtle** came drifting past our bow one evening! I'd never seen one before. I confirmed it in my book as a Loggerhead and was amazed to read that they will swim all around the Atlantic Ocean on a trip that will take them seven years! They apparently hatch their eggs on the East Coast, north of Durban, so I could assume that this little fellow (it was only 20cm long) must have already swam a thousand miles down the coast to get here!

3 November. I took another dive today and saw a large shoal of *Bonito* that merged with the yellowtail and dolphins appeared in their hundreds. Humpback whales: An adult with calf came swimming lazily past our bows this afternoon.

5 November (Guy Fawkes Day). **Sooty Shearwaters**: The odd three or four have been spotted over the last few days.

Common Terns: I had been wondering if they would make an appearance again this year. After spotting a lone individual yesterday, I assured everyone on board that they would soon be roosting on our gunnels and sure enough, this morning the air above the Skua's after deck is full of little terns flitting about, viewing for a spot to land. I'm delighted! I estimate around 200 of them are with us. It is on this happy note that I have to say farewell to the Oribi Oil Field until the next time around.

THE SIGHTING OF A RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD *PHAETHON AETHEREUS* ON THE JOHN ROSS WHILE TOWING THE FREIGHTER IRAN GHAFARI TO CAPE TOWN 9 JANUARY 2001

by Electrician A Chipps

Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus* - 32° 41'S, 15°39'E.
Photo: A Chipps.

I was called from the engine room at 10.30 to come immediately to the bridge to see a white bird with an exceedingly long tail flying close by. We were at 32°41S and 15°39E, 164NM North West of Cape Town and about 10°NM South of where we recently spotted another lone Red Billed Tropicbird at 31°02S and 15°35E on 10 December on our previous job towing the *Captain Diamantis*.

We watched it for an hour as it circled, cocking its head and eyeing our ship intently as it flew close by. It made frequent and seemingly desperate attempts to land, on the gunnels down aft, on the workboat's fenders and even in the anchor housing under the bow. It would get just to the point of landing in a flurry of feathers and off it would go again streaming it's long white tail. It would give up on us, fly off to our tow where it would go through the same motions then returning again to us. It appeared quite desperate and out of sorts. I managed to get about a dozen shots as I scurried after it and I very nearly stepped on the poor thing as I rushed around the back of the funnel with my camera pointed skyward. It had landed spread-eagled on the deck in front of me and made no attempt to move as I approached. Was it exhausted? hungry? I thought a spell of rest in a dark place might do it some good until we could release it again but there was apparently still plenty of life left in it as it squawked alarmingly loud when I picked it up to put it in a large cardboard box.

Tropicbirds, according to my Seabird field guide, only occur in this area as rare vagrants. This raises a few questions: Was this the same vagrant we saw three weeks ago? Was it blown off course? Why did it appear so exhausted? Why could it not simply rest on the water? (We did see it land on the water once for a few minutes) Should I have simply thrown it back into the air to fend for itself? I let it out of my darkened bathroom after a days rest and it came stumbling over the threshold and hobbling all over the cabin on very weak legs that appeared unable to support its weight (this I assume to be 'normal' for pelagic birds) It appeared to be in good health and even took a short flight from the deck onto my bunk. As far as I could make out from my hand book, it was a fully grown adult and, judging by its 540mm long tail, it could be a male. I gave it as much to drink as I could from a piece of cotton wool soaked in water after which it settled down on the deck and began a whole 'preening' ritual from its chest feathers right to the tip of its long tail giving an occasional loud squawk as it did so. It looked quite contented with itself as it settled down on my carpet.

On arrival in Cape Town the next day, he was handed on to SANCCOBs, our local seabird haven but unfortunately, despite all efforts to save it, it died a few days later. An autopsy revealed that it had contracted a bacterial infection in it's throat, probably the reason for it's landing in the first place.

Such a great pity it was. It was a magnificent looking bird as you can see from the picture on page 43, and it attracted extensive coverage in the media and hundreds of people visited SANCCOB to see it.

I was hoping that it could make it back to its breeding colony some day which I have assumed to be St Helena, the nearest one to us. But alas, it was not to be.

A Chipps
mv John Ross

Sea Swallow 50 (2001)

WESTWARD HO TO TRINIDAD

(A virtual journey reconstructed from the *Sea Swallow* database.)

by Stan Howe

Adult Atlantic Puffin *Fratercula arctica*- Hermaness, Unst, Shetland, July 1981.
Photo: Sam Alexander.

It is 50 years (June 1951) since I sailed, as a young student of Petroleum Engineering, from Killingholme on the Humber to Pointe-a-Pierre in the Gulf of Paria on the *mv Regent Jaguar* - a 10,000 ton tanker - returning in September on the *mv Regent Lion* to disembark off Dublin in the Liffey. This round trip presaged two others I was destined to make in the period 1953-1957 as an employee of a Trinidad oil company whose contractual terms included a 90-day home leave every three years, with mode of travel being as supernumerary crew on the first convenient tanker.

To my eternal shame I kept no diary, nor was my interest in birds at that time such as to make a list of those seen. Memory serves to recall surprise at seeing a Whimbrel *(Numenius arquata)* perched on the deck guard-rail one morning when some days out from the UK, and well beyond the confines of the Bay of Biscay. Then dolphins playing ahead of the ship's bow by day, and phosphorescence off the sea at night. Beyond the Azores - 'Misty Isles' I was told, but Bannerman (1966)* translates it as 'Buzzard Islands' - came the Sargasso Sea with its weed, and tropic-birds with their marlin-spike tails grabbing flying fish above the water. Tying up alongside at Pointe-a-Pierre at dawn, Brown Pelicans *(Pelicanus occidentalis)* would be indulging in their communal fishing routine of driving shoals of fish into the shallows and then bounce-diving like giant corks to fill their great beaks with fish before looking skyward to let the accompanying saltwater drain out.

* Birds of the Atlantic Isles Volume Three: A history of Birds of the Azores.

Heading the other way, I remember seeing the top of the 7713ft cone of Pico sticking up above the enveloping cloud; and on another occasion seeing a new island being formed by volcanic action north-west of Faial. When rounding Tuskar Rock en route to Dublin, a British Storm-petrel *(Hydrobates pelagicus)* was found stranded but uninjured on deck. All this is factual enough no doubt, but hardly enough to compile a voyage-list.

Confirmation of the regular open-sea routing between the Dragon's Mouth (Boca del Dragone) and Lands End (for orders) however can be found in the *Sea Swallow* database by referring to records from other Regent tankers *(Falcon/Royal/Springbok)*, and dividing the c.4320nm trip into 12 sectors of 360nm each to represent the average two-week transit (port to port) at a maximum 15kts enables a daily position to be established. Searching the database for records within a Marsden Square quadrant (5 degrees) for each of these positions yields the data needed to virtually create the missing list of birds to be seen!

Good in theory, what about in practice?

Table 1 presents the results from southwest (Trinidad) to northeast (UK), with numbers of records for each species/group of birds in the database as a rough guide to relative frequency of occurrence.

I have no plans to repeat the journey, but someone of the RNBWS membership might pass that way and he could critically appraise the list. Anything above a row-boat would probably do the trip faster than we did; and bear in mind the 28 days at sea for the round trip counted as part of our 90-day leave! Notwithstanding that however, 50 years obliterate such negatives; while thanks to computers and the *Sea Swallow* database I am now able to wallow in nostalgia for 'Le Temps Perdu' browsing a bird-list I never made.

Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* Fowlsheugh, Kincardinshire, April 1980.
Photo: Sam Alexander

Species	Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	Degrees North	48	46	44	42	40	37	31	27	22.5	19	15	11	
	Degree West	10	15	22	27.5	32	37	44.5	48	51	54.5	58	61	
1. Yellow-nosed Albatross *Diomedea chlororhynchos*		1												1
2. Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*		14	7	1										22
3. Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii*		1	2	4	7	1								15
4. Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*			15	11	17	6								49
5. Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis*		34	10	3		2	1	1		2	4	1	1	58
6. Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*		3												3
7. Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*		5	4	1	2	2								14
8. Audobon's Shearwater *Puffinus lherminieri*												1	3	4
9. Little Shearwater *Puffinus assimilis*		1	1	1	2	1	1	1						8
10. Wilson's Storm-petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*		8		2	2	1	1	1				5	1	21
11. White-faced Storm-petrel *Pelagodroma marina*		1	2				1							4
12. British Storm-petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*		9	1		2	2								14
13. Leach's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*		5	2		1	4	6	1	1	3	5	2		30
14. Madeiran Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma castro*		1			3	3	1			1	1			10
15. Red-billed Tropichird *Phaethon aethereus*								1	1	4	6	5	7	24
16. White-tailed Tropichird *Phaethon lepturus*								1	5	3	1			10
17. Northern Gannet *Sula bassanus*		10	4				1							15
18. Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra*											1	3	5	9
19. Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*											1	4	9	14
20. Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*												5	8	13
21. Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*											7	4	5	16
22. Magnificent Frigate-bird *Fregata magnificens*				1							9	3	7	20
23. Herons *Ardeidae spp.*		1					1	2	1					5
24. Geese and Ducks *Anseridae spp*		3	2	1										6
25. Falcons *Falconidae spp*		14	9	3										26
26. Osprey *Panio haliaetus*								1	1					2
27. Crakes and rails *Rallidae spp*		3		2	1									6
28. Waders *Charadriidae spp*		37	13	2	1	1	2							56
29. Phalaropes *Phalaropus spp.*		3	1				2	1						7
30. Great Skua *Catharacta skua*		13	9			1							2	25
31. Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*		5	4			1	1				1			12
32. Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*		5	4	2	1	4	4	3			1	7	7	38
33. Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*		4	3								1			8
34. Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla*											1	2	4	7
35. Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*			1											1
36. Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*		6	7	1	1	2								17
37. GBB Gull *Larus marinus*		3	3											6
38. LBB Gull *Larus fuscus*		7	4											11
39. BH Gull *Larus ridibundus*		2	2	1	1									6
40. Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*		6	1		1									8
41. BL Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*		8	6	1	2	2	1	4	3			1	1	29
42. Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*				1	2									3
43. Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*		2	2											4
44. Royal Tern *Sterna maxima*												2	2	4
45. Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*												1		1
46. Bridled Tern *Sterna anaethetus*												1	1	2
47. Sooty Tern *Sterna fuscata*										1	1	2	7	11
48. Black Noddy *Anous minutes*												1	1	2
49. Little Auk *Alle alle*		1												1
50. Atlantic Puffin *Fratercula arctica*		3	3	1										7
51. Pigeons and Doves *Columbidae spp*		30	7	4										41
52. Owls *Strigidae spp*		5	6	3	1					1				16
53. Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor*						1								1
54. Common Swift *Apus apus*		3												3
55. Passerines:	Hirundines	34	12	6	2	2	1	2	1		1	1	1	63
	Larks-Pipits-Wagtails	21	7	2										30
	Wren-Dunnock	2	1											3
	Turdidae	32	10	2										44
	Old World Warblers	26	6	2										34
	Flycathers	3												3
	Corvids-Starlings	9	5	4										18
	Sparrows-Finches-Buntings	15	2											17
	New World Warblers				1			1			1	2	2	7
	Totals	399	178	62	50	36	24	20	13	15	42	53	74	965

Table 1. Voyage days from Lands End to Bocas del Dragone

SEABIRD OBSERVATIONS FROM HMS DUMBARTON CASTLE IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC 1999

by Lt D Gates RN

During the period June to October 1999 I was appointed to *HMS Dumbarton Castle*, the Falkland Island Patrol Vessel. Borne for navigational training, I spent considerable time bridge watch-keeping, and managed to record a few observations of birds at sea. With a GPS on bridge it is fairly easy to achieve this accurately with minimum effort, and proved to be a stimulating time to pass those long hours on watch. Much of our time was spent patrolling the waters inshore (<20 nautical miles from land) and thus my sightings reflect this.

I was fortunate to have a passage from the Falklands to Montevideo, Uruguay, which provided a little more variety. This journey took place on 4-7 October 1999 and I have submitted observations along the route (approximately from 50°N 057°W to 37°N 055° 20'sW).

Much is written in *Sea Swallow* on the Falkland Island Waters and I regret that I have been unable to provide any analysis due to the constraints of my job. I would have liked to produce a report much as the excellent South West Atlantic Seabirds at Sea Team in *Sea Swallow* 49 (2000).

I have produced a bird list, the full details of which have been submitted in Sea Bird Forms to the RNBWS. Some comment on the list is below.

After many observations of the Southern Giant Petrel *Macronectes giganteus*, I believed I saw a pattern in that the juveniles tended to be inshore and the adults offshore. It may be that the adults have the best feeding sites or that the juveniles do not have enough experience to venture far offshore. I did not have enough data to statistically examine this.

An Emperor Penguin *Aptenodytes forsteri* was sighted 42° 38'S 56° 28'W. Although I am sure it was much larger than a King Penguin, it is probably too far North, and thus I can not he confident in its classification.

A South Polar Skua *Catharacta maccormicki* may have been a Southern Giant Petrel.

One of the more unusual sightings was of the threatened Striated Caracara *Phalcoboenus australis* while I was conducting an anchorage at Saunders Island. It took a fancy to the head gear of a member of the fo'c'sle party and attacked his head, much to the amusement of everyone else.

In total I properly recorded 33 species of birds at sea, numbering 4235 birds, a fraction of those observed. For operational reasons I could not record all the time, however, I did manage to record 348 hours worth in Falkland Island waters. It was a highlight to see my first Wandering Albatross *Diomedia exulans* and I was impressed by the richness of the seabird life there.

Lt Dan Gates RN
HMS Vanguard
BFPO 418

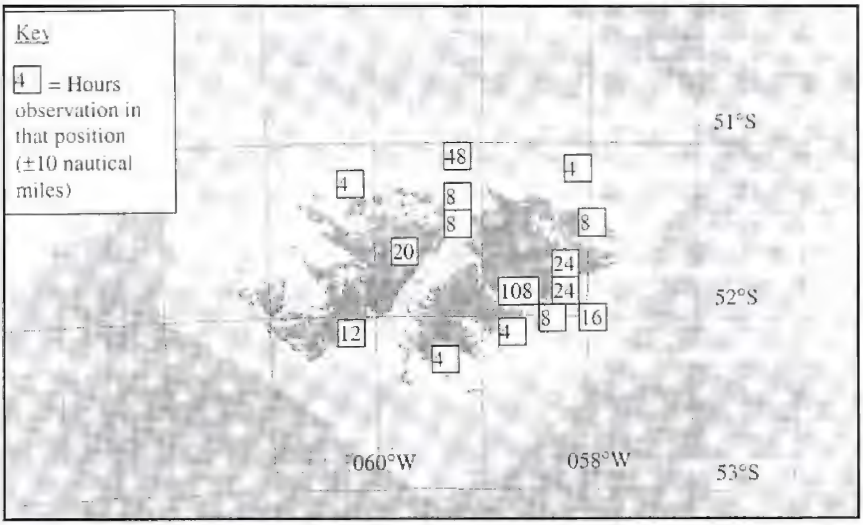

Figure 1: Distribution of Survey Effort (Hours)

Marine Mammals

Long Finned Pilot Whale	*Globicephala melaena*
Peale's Dolphin	*Lagenorhynchus austris*
Commerson's Dolphin	*Cephalorhynchus commersomii*
Southern Sea Lion	*Otaria flavescens*

Birds

Order CHARADRIIFORMES

Wandering Albatross	*Diomedea exulans*
Black Browed Albatross	*Diomedea melanophris*
Yellow-nosed Albatross	*Diomedea chlororhynchos*
Grey-headed Albatross	*Diomedea chrysostoma*
Southern Giant Petrel	*Macronectes giganteus*
Southern Fulmar	*Fulmarus glacialodes*
Cape Petrel	*Daption capense*
Thin Billed Prion	*Pachyptila belcheri*
Fairy Prion	*Procellaria aequinoctialis*
Grey Petrel	*Pachyptila tutur*
Great Shearwater	*Puffinus gravis*
Sooty Shearwater	*Puffinus griseus*
Wilson's Storm Petrel	*Oceanites oceanicus*

Order SPHENISCIFORMES

King Penguin	*Aptenodytes patagonicus*
Emperor Penguin (?)	*Aptenodytes forsteri*
Gentoo Penguin	*Pygoscelis papua papua*
Chinstrap Penguin	*Pygoscelis antarctica*
Macaroni Penguin	*Eudyptes chrysolophus*
Magellanic Penguin	*Spheniscus magellanicus*

Adult Magellanic Penguin *Spheniscus magellanicus* leaving its nest burrow - Pebble Island, Falklands Islands, 28 November 1996. *Photo:* Sam Alexander.

Order PELECANIFORMES

Rock Shag	*Phalacrocorax magellancius*
Imperial Shag	*Phalacrocorax atriceps albiventer*

Order ANSERIFORMES

Kelp Goose	*Chloephaga hybrida malvinarum*
Falkland Flightless Steamer Duck	*Tachyeres brachydactyla*
Flying Steamer Duck	*Tachyeres patachonicus*
Chiloe Wigeon	*Anas sibilatrix*

Order CATHARTIFORMES

Turkey Vulture	*Cathartes aura falklandicus*

Adult Imperial Shag *Phalacrocorax (atriceps) albiventer* on nest - Pebble Island, Falklands Islands, 28 November 1996. *Photo:* Sam Alexander.

Order FALCONIFORMES

Striated Caracara	*Phalcoboenus australis*

Order CHARADRIIFORMES

Snowy Sheathbill	*Chionis alba*
South Polar Skua (?)	*Catharacta maccormicki*
Parasitic Jaeger	*Stercorarius parasiticus*
Dolphin Gull	*Larus scoresbii*
Kelp Gull	*Larus belcheri*
South American Tern	*Sterna hirundinacea*

Nomenclature according to Falklands Conservation (Check List: www.falklands-nature.demon.co.uk)

GABO ISLAND
VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

By S Howe

On 8 March 2001 in calm weather and good visibility, despite overcast conditions and occasional showers, I flew down the coast of New South Wales from Merimbula over Cape Howe to land on Gabo Island's grass strip airfield.

It had long been my ambition to visit eponymous Cape Howe, but this opportunity was almost foregone on learning it was the mid-point of a coastal track from Eden (NSW) to Mallacoota (Victoria) that took five days to trek on foot subject to having one of a limited 30 permits granted to enter the surrounding National Park at any one time! To have followed in a long series of shipwrecks off the aptly named Disaster Bay seemed easier to achieve. Then I heard about day trips to Gabo (pronounced Gay-Bow) by Cessna 205.

Cape Howe when it came beneath us was slightly disappointing. I had imagined a massive headland separating the tempestuous Bass Strait from the long reaches of the south Tasman Sea. Instead the forested mountains gave out at modest Howe Hill (350m) some 5km inland, and in turn the forest gave out a few hundred metres from the coast to leave bare sand dunes with a small cairn on the beach to indicate where NSW ends and Victoria begins. Offshore some 8km south however the mainland pink granite resurfaced in the form of Gabo Island; some 300 acres of sandy vegetated land with a splendid 150ft lighthouse - completed in 1862 after much vacillation between the then still unfederated states of NSW and Victoria. Stonemasons from Peterhead in Aberdeenshire were imported to dress and set the granite, and 140 years on I had no qualms about climbing its 212 stairs to get a panoramic view of the seas around.

From this vantage-point one saw Tasmanian (Southern) Fur Seals *(Arctocephalus forsteri)* hauled out on the rocks, including a few pups of the year. This near sedentary species was almost hunted to extinction in the nineteenth century, but thanks to protection has hung on and is now slowly expanding locally. One regrettably was tangled about its massive neck with green nylon fishing net, and looking decidedly sick having been in this state for over 18-months as I was told. Nearby a family of Sooty Oystercatchers *(Ostralegus fuliginosus)* were foraging on the bare rocky coast, with a Great Cormorant *(Phalacrocorax carbo)* drying its wings close by. Low down at sea were a great multitude of dark long-winged Short-tailed Shearwaters *(Puffinus tenuirostris)* arcing and planing above the waves. These had been visible as vast mats on the sea-surface as we had come in to land at about 11.00hrs local time. PPO Harrison on *mv Cambridge* had previously reported 'hundreds of thousands' of these so-called Mutton-birds off Cape Howe on September 1957 in *Sea Swallow* 11:06 so I was expecting them, although by March/April the adults are already preparing to leave on their peregrination to the North Pacific leaving the young ***'boules de suif'*** in their deep burrows to fledge alone and unfed on islands like Gabo in the Bass Strait. Some 40,000 pairs are estimated to breed on Gabo, but we carefully did not seek out their burrows under the dense vegetation in the centre of the island.

No mention will be found in earlier issues of *Sea Swallow* however of Little Penguins *(Eudyptula minor)* in the vicinity of Cape Howe, and one would have to overnight on Gabo to see them come ashore to tend their young. The renowned Penguin Parade on Phillip Island near Melbourne is some 500km west, and they also can be found as far north as Newcastle another 500km distant. However while walking the 6km circumference around the island, and even within feet of the base of the lighthouse, one hears scuffling and then notices sand flying

Stan Howe on Gabo Island.

out of shallow holes beneath the vegetation as fledgling young penguins seek to dig themselves deeper. All the passer-by sees on peering into the void is a lovely silvery blue back and tail, with pale pinkish feet stretched out behind. It now transpires from counts undertaken in the late 1990's, that Gabo is possibly the largest Little Penguin colony in the world at c.15,000 pairs [See website www.thesalmons.org/lynn/gabo.html], or double the estimate given in HANZAB (1990) for the whole of Victoria.

Appended is a list of 75 bird species that have been recorded on or around Gabo Island, courtesy Mike Baker (Merimbula Airport Manager and Cessna pilot). Evidence of Welcome Swallow *(Hirundo neoxena)* having nested was noted in a long-deserted sealer's hut, and a few birds were still around perching on fence posts. Other birds that took my eye/ear as we wandered over the island were Richard's Pipit locally known as Ground Lark *(Anthus novaeseelandiae)* and Masked Plover *(Vanellus miles)* both exploiting the short grass on the airstrip; and a European Blackbird flew off chuckling under the bushes adjacent. A yellow-winged nectivore visiting the flowering trees had the streaked flanks and white cheeks characteristic of the New Holland Honeyeater *(Phylidonyris novaehollandiae)*. Flocks of Silver-eye *(Zosterops lateralis* complex) were indulging in a taste for salt-flavoured blackberries. Our humble bramble is an invasive weed among the native teatrees and banksias, and the sea spray gives the fruit a distinctive saline tang; the precise subspecies of Silver-eye involved is uncertain. The nominate race might be expected to be dispersing north in flocks at this time after breeding in Tasmania, but it has a grey throat and rusty flanks. These birds had yellow throats and rusty flanks like *ssp.familiaris* that resides in Victoria/NSW and so less likely to be in flocks. The field guides however warn that hybrids are not uncommon!

All too soon it was 15:00hrs and time to leave the island to its wildlife and single human resident, the automated-lighthouse maintenance man. Signs were though that old lighthouse-keeper accommodations were being restored for potential use by any hardy souls intent on detailed study of the flora and fauna. And just to give my Cape Howe dream a final boost, my

trusty pilot explained to me that **Gabo** was supposed to be as near as the local itinerant aborigines could get to enunciating **Cape Howe.** Not such a disappointing place then after all, this 'Gay-Bow'.

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Gabo Island: Provisional Bird List

Non-passerines:

Little Penguin	*Eudyptula minor*
Black-browed Albatross	*Diomedea melanophris*
Yellow-nosed Albatross	*Diomedea chlororhynchos*
Shy Albatross	*Diomedea cauta*
Short-tailed Shearwater	*Puffinus tenuirostris*
Fluttering Shearwater	*Puffinus gavia*
White-faced Storm-petrel	*Pelagodroma marina*
Australasian Gannet	*Morus serrator*
Great Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*
Black-faced Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax fuscescens*
Pied Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax varius*
Little Black Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*
Little Pied Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*
White-faced Heron	*Ardea novaehollandiae*
Cattle Egret	*Ardea ibis*
Eastern Reef Egret	*Egretta sacra*
Black Swan	*Cygnus atratus*
Black-shouldered Kite	*Elanus notatus*
Whistling Kite	*Haliastur sphenurus*
White-bellied Sea Eagle	*Haliaeetus leucogaster*
Marsh Harrier	*Circus aeruginosus*
Brown Falcon	*Falco berigora*
Australian Kestrel	*Falco cenchroides*
Stubble Quail	*Coturnix pectoralis*
Brown Quail	*Coturnix australis*
Pied Oystercatcher	*Haematopus ostralegus*
Sooty Oystercatcher	*Haematopus fuliginosus*
Masked Lapwing	*Vanellus miles*
Common Sandpiper	*Tringa hypoleucos*
Latham's Snipe	*Gallinago hardwickii*
Arctic Jaeger	*Stercorarius parasiticus*
Silver Gull	*Larus novaehollandiae*

Pacific Gull	*Larus pacificus*
Caspian Tern	*Hydroprogne caspia*
Common Tern	*Sterna hirundo*
Crested Tern	*Sterna bergii*
Brush Bronzewing	*Phaps elegans*
Common Bronzewing	*Phaps chalcoptera*
Galah	*Cacatua roseicapilla*
Rainbow Lorikeet	*Trichoglossus haematodus*
Ground Parrot	*Pezoporus wallicus*
Pallid Cuckoo	*Cuculus pallidus*
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	*Cuculus pyrrhophanus*
Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo	*Chrysococcyz basalis*
Southern Boobook Owl	*Ninox novaeseelandiae*
Barn Owl	*Tyto alba*
White-throated Needletail	*Hirundapus caudacutus*
Sacred Kingfisher	*Todiramphus sanctus*

Passerines:

Skylark	*Alauda arvensis*
Welcome Swallow	*Hirundo nioxena*
Fairy Martin	*Hirundo ariel*
Richard's Pipit	*Anthus novaeseelandiae*
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	*Coracina novaehollandiae*
White's Thrush	*Zoothera dauma*
Common Blackbird	*Turdus merula*
Golden Whistler	*Pachycephala pectoralis*
Grey Fantail	*Rhipidura fuliginosa*
Willie Wagtail	*Rhipidura leucophrys*
Clamorous Reed Warbler	*Acrocephalus stentoreus*
Little Grassbird	*Megalurus gramineus*
Golden-headed Cisticola	*Cisticola exilis*
Rufous Songlark	*Cinclorhamphus mathewsi*
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	*Lichenostomus chrysops*
New Holland Honeyeater	*Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*
Tawny-crowned Honeyeater	*Phylidopyris melanops*
White-fronted Chat	*Ephthianura albifrons*
Silvereye	*Zosterops lateralis*
European Goldfinch	*Carduelis carduelis*
Red-browed Firefinch	*Emblema temporalis*
Common Starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*
Australian Raven	*Corvus coronoides*
Superb Fairy Wren	*Malurus cyaneus*

List courtesy Mike Baker (Merimbula Airport) culled from various sources.

THE TRISTAN-GOUGH WANDERING ALBATROSS

By Dr WRP Bourne

Roberto Dabbene described a new form of albatross from the sub-tropical South Atlantic in 1927 (*Physis* 8: 563) subsequently renamed after him *Diomedea exulans dabbenena*. It is recognisable at sea, smaller that the huge southern birds, with more contrast in the plumage (Bourne 1990, in press). The adults are uniform in appearance and rather distinct with pale bodies but a dark upperwing as in the northern Royal Albatross *Diomedea epomophora sanfordi*, but with a pale central patch in the base of the wing. They breed in the Tristan-Gough group, most disperse west towards the coast of Argentina, and one has been collected at Palermo, Sicily in October 1957.

Tristan-Gough Wandering Albatross *Diomedea (exulans) dabbenena*.
Photo: Dr. WRP Bourne.

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Sea Swallow 50 (2001)

VARIATIONS IN THE SMALL SHEARWATER

By Dr WRP Bourne

A group of similar small black and white shearwaters occurring throughout the warmer parts of the world and showing much local and individual variation have caused trouble to taxonomists for over two centuries. Originally described as many species, they were combined into one by Hartert (1903-23), and then split up again into two by Murphy (1927), including a large, long-tailed, brown-backed, heavily-marked tropical form Audubon's Shearwater *Puffinus lherminieri*, and a smaller, short-tailed, black-backed temperate form showing more white, the Little Shearwater *P. assimilis*, occurring mainly in the south with outposts in the North Atlantic.

The affinities of the northern birds were soon challenged in a review of the southern forms by Fleming & Serventy (1943), but there was little further progress until Austin (1996) showed that the northernmost Atlantic form *baroli*, which shows a superficial resemblance to the southern Little Shearwaters (and appears on the British List), is molecularly closer to *lherminieri*, so that its similarity to *assimilis* may be due to convergence in a similar environment. Conversely, the birds tend to become melanistic in the tropics, including an all black individual of nominate *lherminieri* from Islot Hardy, Martinique, on 1 March 1965 in Paris, a partially-melanistic individual described as a race *temptator* from Moheli in the Comoros (Louette & Herremans 1985), and a rather distinct melanistic form *heinrothi* found around New Britain. Their life history is always rather similar, except that in cool places they breed in the summer, in warmer ones in the winter, and in the tropics all the year (Mougin *et al* 1992).

There has recently been a rash of further subdivision in the Indian ocean, culminating in the widely-publicised description of a new species, the 'Mascarene Shearwater *P atrodorsalis*', about which I expressed doubts (Bourne 1995). It has finally been revealed that in fact it seems molecularly indistinguishable from the Mascarene form *bailloni*, confirming that this is its immature plumage, though it is still claimed to disperse north to Eilat (Shirihai 2001). It is not explained why it should not be a similar unrecognised immature plumage of the nearer form *persicus*.

An outstanding problem occurs in the South Pacific, where I once described a bird from Rapa in the Tubaui group resembling a long-tailed southern Little Shearwater as a race *P a myrtae* (Bourne 1959), since four further specimens in Paris have shorter tails, while though we failed to find them where I suggested that they might occur on Juan Fernandez, three fairly similar birds have been collected off Chiloe Island, Chile (Table 1). Since the distribution of some other warm and cool water birds such as the *Fregetta* and *Nesofregetta* storm-petrels is now known to overlap at Rapa (Bourne 2000) it seems possible that the small shearwaters might be overlapping and perhaps hybridising there as well?

I am indebted to Dr Joe Jehl jr. for information about his Chiloe records (Jehl 1973) and loan of a specimen.

Table 1: Small shearwaters from the South Pacific

Rapa, Tubuai Islands		Wing	Tail	Bill	Tarsus	Toe
Tring 1925.12.22.147, 17.4.25 type	f	196	81	25	40	43
Paris 1975.1787 Taururoa, 20.10.74	f	191	71	26	39	37
Paris 1975.1788 Taururoa, 20.10.74	f	193	72	26	38	40
Paris 1975.1789 Taururoa, 20.10.74	j	199	71	26	38	38
Paris 1975.1790 Taururoa, 16.10.74	f	202	71	27	40	39
West side Chiloe Id., Chile						
San Diego 37553 Chiloe 1.6.70	m	198	77	26	41	47

(m - male, f- female, j - juvenile).

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OBITUARY

Chris Jowett

Chris Jowett, our New Zealand representative, was a remarkable example of gallantry in the face of adversity. He first became interested in seabirds during Muriwai beach patrols in 1978-85, and then after aquiring a BSc and MSc in zoology started making regular counts of seabirds seen on 71 trips to Great Barrier Island between 1992-96. Then, although he knew he had an infiltrating brain tumour, he made 37 more extensive voyages throughout the western Pacific by 1999, then visiting the sub-antarctic islands and sailing around the world. He was eventually lost overboard off the Great Barrier Reef ferry in July 2001. It is hoped that means can be found to make proper use of a total approaching 300 hours of observation of nearly a million seabirds.

WRPB

REVIEW

Ashmole, N.P. and Ashmole, M.J. 2000. *St Helena and Ascension Island: a natural history.* Anthony Nelson, Oswestry. 496p., 32 colour plates, ISBN 0 904614611, £30.

This is a handsome account of the history and terrestrial wildlife of two remarkable tropical islands in the South Atlantic. It starts with a description of what each was like when they were discovered, what has happened to it and their present state, ending with combined lists of the animals and plants taking up nearly half the book. Since St Helena is older and wetter and was more important as a base on the way to the Orient its story is more complex, including the development of a number of ornamental endemic trees often only saved from extinction at the last moment, a lost community of land and sea-birds, and passing vagrants including Napoleon, but Ascension has been catching up in the space-age. The book is highly subsidised, and remarkably cheap at the price.

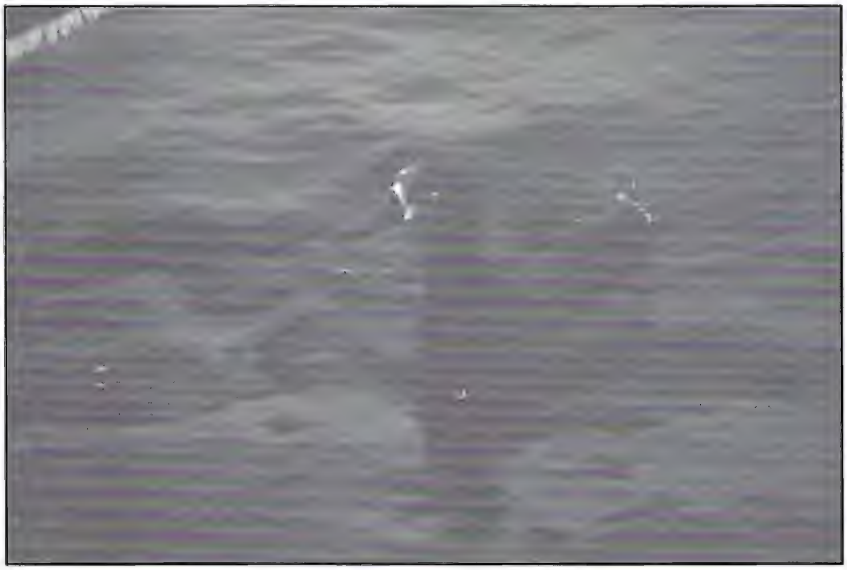
WRPB

REVIEW

Tickell, W.L.N. *Albatrosses*. Pica Press. Sussex. ISBN 1-873403-94-1. Pp 448, 52 colour plates, numerous figures, £40.

Over 40 years ago I shared a room at Oxford with a young zealot who babbled incessantly about some previously unknown Bird Island off South Georgia, where he had been camping out for years in a hut watching albatrosses. At that time I knew nothing about either, and it never occurred to me that I might one day visit them (in a helicopter piloted by Prince Andrew), or find myself reviewing a resulting book. This is a handsome, monumental life's work, covering everything about the birds under the headings introduction - southern, tropical and northern species - comparative biology - and victims and verse. In general it is thorough, accurate, and readable, with much original research and an unusual literary dimension for ornithology. The most entertaining feature is the precarious balancing act by the author on the fence (or in the ditch) between the old and new nomenclatures, attempting to make the work intelligible from either point of view. Well done, Lance.

WRPB



Black-footed Albatross *Diomedea nigripes* - Monterey Bay, California May 1992. *Photo:* Sam Alexander.

SEABIRDS OF THE RUSSIAN FAR EAST - A REVIEW

Kondratyev, AY (2000); *Seabirds of the Russian Far East.* Canadian Wildlife Service, Special Publication. 140pp. ISBN 0-662-28997-8.

Thanks to the Canadian Wildlife Service, information on seabirds around 4000 miles of coast in the Russian Far East is here made available in English for the first time. The region stretches from the East Siberian and Chukchi Seas, through the Bering Straits and Anadyr Bay to Sea of Okhotsk and the northern Sea of Japan (between Vladivostok and Hokkaido). Many of the seas covered are ice-bound for a good proportion of each year , but oceanological conditions provide suitable feeding between June and October for seabirds breeding in the area. A few even remain on the open-water polynas that exist throughout the winter.

Maps and detail are published for 40 spp that breed in the region. They are listed here, with those species previously reported from the region in *Sea Swallow* indicated by asterisk.

* Northern Fulmar	*Fulmarus glacialis*
* Streaked Shearwater	*Calonectris leucomelas*
* Leach's Storm-petrel	*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*
Swinhoe's Storm-petrel	*Oceanodroma monorhis*
* Fork-tailed Storm-petrel	*Oceanodroma furcata*
Great Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*
* Japanese (Temminck's) Cormorant	*Phallacrocorax filamentosus*
* Red-faced Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax urile*
* Pelagic Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax pelagicus*
Common black-headed Gull	*Larus ridibundus*
Herring Gull	*Larus argentatus*
* Black-tailed Gull	*Larus crassirostris*
* Glaucous-winged Gull	*Larus glaucescens*
* Glaucous Gull	*Larus hyperboreus*
* Slaty-backed Gull	*Larus schistisagus*
Common Gull	*Larus canus*
Sabine's Gull	*Xema sabini*
* Black-legged Kittiwake	*Rissa tridactyla*
* Red-legged Kittiwake	*Rissa brevirostris*
Ross' Gull	*Rhodostethia rosea*
Common Tern	*Sterna hirundo*
Arctic Tern	*Sterna paradisaea*
Aleutian Tern	*Sterna aleutica*
Little Auk (Dovekie)	*Alle alle*
* Common Guillemot	*Uria aalge*
* Brunnich's Guillemot	*Uria lomvia*
Pigeon Guillemot	*Cepphus columba*
Black Guillemot	*Cepphus grylle*
* Spectacled Guillemot	*Cepphus carbo*
* (Long-billed) Marbled Guillemot	*Brachyramphus (marmoralus) perdix*
Kittlitz's Murrelet	*Brachyramphus brevirostris*
* Ancient Murrelet	*Synthliboramphus antiquus*

* Japanese (Crested) Murrelet	*Synthliboramphus wumizusume*
* Parakeet Muffelet	*Cyclorhynchus psittacula*
* Crested Auklet	*Aethia cristatella*
* Whiskered Auklet	*Aethia pygmaea*
* Least Auklet	*Aethia pusilla*
* Rhinoceros Auklet	*Cerorhinca monocerata*
* Horned Puffin	*Fratercula corniculata*
* Tufted Puffin	*Fratercula cirrhata*

Most of the *Sea Swallow* records are from vessels taking the northerly routes across the Pacific between North America and Japan, and coasting down past Kommandorskiye, Kamchatka and the Kuriles. The only records RNBWS has from within the Sea of Okhotsk are of Pale-footed Shearwater (7.x.82 SS33:15), 100 Northern Fulmar (24.ix.73 SS33:45), thousands Fork-tailed Storm-petrel (24.ix.73 SS34:38), and five Tufted Puffin (6.x.82 SS33:21). All these in the southern sector east of Sakhalin and west of the Kuriles. The series of maps showing the distribution of seabirds within the Sea of Okhotsk during the boreal summer/autumn is therefore particularly interesting and should be helpful in interpreting our records east of Kamchatka and the Kuriles.

Other topics dealt with in the booklet are an assessment of the Russian Far East Seas as seabird habitats, the seabird mortality arising from drift-net salmon fisheries, and conservation measures. Dr WRP Bourne may find some answers in these pages too, to the questions posed in his note on the Long-billed Murrelet in SS45:80. Altogether a most valuable and enlightening publication.

Stan Howe

Adult and juvenile Great Cormorants *Phalacrocorax carbo maroccanus* - Agadir, Morocco May 1988. Photo: Sam Alexander.

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Send to: GD Lewis, 40 Pondfield Rd, Saltash, Cornwall PL12 4UA.

Joining Form

THE ROYAL NAVAL BIRDWATCHING SOCIETY (RNBWS)

1. I am interested in joining the RNBWS and wish to be enrolled as: (✓ ❑ as appropriate)

❑ **Full Member** £8 (or £7 covenanted)

❑ **Associate Member** (those not eligible as a full member but wishing to assist the objectives of the society) £8 (or £7 covenanted)

❑ **Library Member** (receives *Sea Swallow* only) cost of *Sea Swallow* (£8) plus postage

2. Name, initials, rank and decorations (BLOCK LETTERS)

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3. Permanent address*

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4. Present Ship or Station*

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5. Subscription herewith: £.....

Please send me a Banker's order form ❑ and Covenant form ❑

Date..... Signature.....

To: The Hon. Secretary, RNBWS, 19 Downlands Way, South Wonston, Winchester, Hants SO21 3HS

****Please inform the Hon Secretary of any changes***

Bankers Order Form

To: (Banker's Name).....

Address.....
.....
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.....

On the.....and thereafter each 1st January, unless I instruct you in writing to the contrary, please remit to **The Manager, Lloyds Bank PLC, 49 High Street, Winchester, Hants. SO23 9BU** for the account of the Royal Naval Birdwatching Society, (No. 0117948), the sum of
pounds and debit my account.

A/C Details

Bank Sort Code:.....

Account No.:.....

NOTE - This order supersedes any previous order in force with the above Society which should therefore be cancelled.

Signature.....

Rank.....

Address.....

Date.....19.....

PLEASE SEND THIS FORM TO THE HON. TREASURER ROYAL NAVAL BIRDWATCHING SOCIETY, 80 OTTERFIELD ROAD, YIEWSLEY, WEST DRAYTON, MIDDLESEX UB7 8PF WHO WILL FORWARD IT TO YOUR BANK.

Deed of Covenant

To: THE ROYAL NAVAL BIRDWATCHING SOCIETY
(Registered Charity No. 207619)

I promise to pay you during my lifetime, such a sum as after deduction of income tax at the basic rate, amounts to £..... (1) per annum, provided that I may revoke in writing this deed of covenant at any time after the expiry of FOUR years from
(date of first payment under the deed) (2)

Signed and delivered.....(3)

Date.....19.....

Full Name.....

Address.....
.....
.....

Witnessed by: (3)

Signed.....

Full Name.....

Address.....
.....
.....

NOTES

1. Enter the amount you will be paying the charity.
2. If you choose to enter an actual date it must not be earlier than the date you sign the deed.
3. You must sign the form, and enter the date you actually sign it in the presence of the witness, who should also sign where shown.

USEFUL ADDRESSES

Hon. Member and Adviser RNBWS: Dr W R P Bourne MBOU CFA0U, Zoology Dept. University of Aberdeen, Tillydrome Ave, Aberdeen AB9 2TN (Home Tel: 01340 820569)

RNBWS LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES - UNITED KINGDOM

Dartmouth: Dr Richard Porter, Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, Devon TQ6 0HJ (01803 837233).
Devonport Area: K E Partridge, 165 Stanborough Road, Elburton, Plymouth, Devon PL9 8NY (01752 404475).
Portsmouth Area: Lt Cdr B F Witts OBE FRGS RN, Oakwood, Duffield Lane, Woodmancote, Emsworth, Hants PO10 8PZ (01243 371497).
Portland: Martin Cade. Portland Bird Observatory and Field Centre, Old Lower Light, Portland, Dorset DT (01305 820553 Daytime only).
Southampton: Frank Vosey, 53 Rotterdam Towers, International Way, Weston, Southampton Hants (01703 44038).
Scotland - Faslane & Rosyth: Commander N B P Morton RN, Office of FOSNNI, HM Naval Base Clyde. Faslane, Helensburgh, Dumbartonshire.
Humber Area: Bill Curtis, Farm Cottage, Church Lane, Atwick, Nr Driffield E Yorks YO25 8DH (01964 532477).
South Wales: M Sullivan, 219 College Road, Whitehurch, Cardiff CF4 2NV.

RNBWS LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES - OVERSEAS

Arabian Gulf: Colin Richardson c/o Emirates Bird Records Committee, PO Box 50394, Dubai, United Arab Emirates (Tel/Fax +9714 472277, Mobile +97150 6503398).
Australia: Captain N G Cheshire MN, 4 Willora Rd, Eden Hills, Adelaide, South Australia 5050 (Tel. Adelaide (08) 8370 2212).
or
A E F Rogers. 26 Westleigh Drive, Westleigh, Sydney, New South Wales 2120.
Black Sea: Gabriel Banica, Str. 1 Decembrie 1918 nr. 3. B1.FI7 Ap49, 8700 Constania. Romania
Bombay: J S Serreo, Bombay Natural History Society. Hornbill House. Bombay 400-023, India (Tel: 24 38 69/24 40 85).
Falkland Islands: Ian Strange, The Dolphins, Port Stanley, Falkland Islands.
Gibraltar: Dr Clive Finlayson, 30 Ross House, Red Sands Road, Gibraltar.
Madeira: Dr Francis Zino, Avenida do Infante 26, Rez-do-Chao 'C', 9000 Funchal, Madeira (Tel: 63292)
Naples: Mark Walters, 181 Via Morghen, Vomero, Naples, Italy.
USA: Dr R G Wolk PhD, 6001 Clare Court, Raleigh, North Carolina 27609, USA. Tel: 919 848 4812.

INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

Interested persons are invited to submit contributions for *Sea Swallow*, authors do not need to be RNBWS members. Material may take the form of papers, notes, progress reports, letters or reviews.
The style used in *Sea Swallow*, should be followed, with the standard abbreviations, nomenclature and use of references.
Manuscripts should ideally he typed in double spacing, together with figures and diagrams. Accompanying photographs are preferred as prints rather than slides. Those with facilities to do so are encouraged to send on IBM PC compatible 3.5" disc (specifying the word processing software used), together with a hard copy print. ASCII back-tip text is also desirable.
Contributions are welcome at any time, but if for inclusion in the next edition must reach the editor by 31 May.